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WAR IS HELL

THE FIRST FLIGHT OF THE PHANTOM EAGLE™

**EXPLICIT
CONTENT**

MARVEL



ENNIS • CHAYKIN



WAR IS HELL

THE FIRST FLIGHT OF THE PHANTOM EAGLE

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No one expected aeroplanes to fight.

When the First World War began, their task was deemed to be reconnaissance. Pilots who met an enemy machine would simply wave.

Then someone took a shot at someone else with a revolver, and the waving stopped. Rifles were tried, and then machine guns, which seemed to fit the bill.

Eventually, the guns were synchronized to fire between the spinning blades of the propeller, and the fighter 'plane — as we would understand it — came of age.

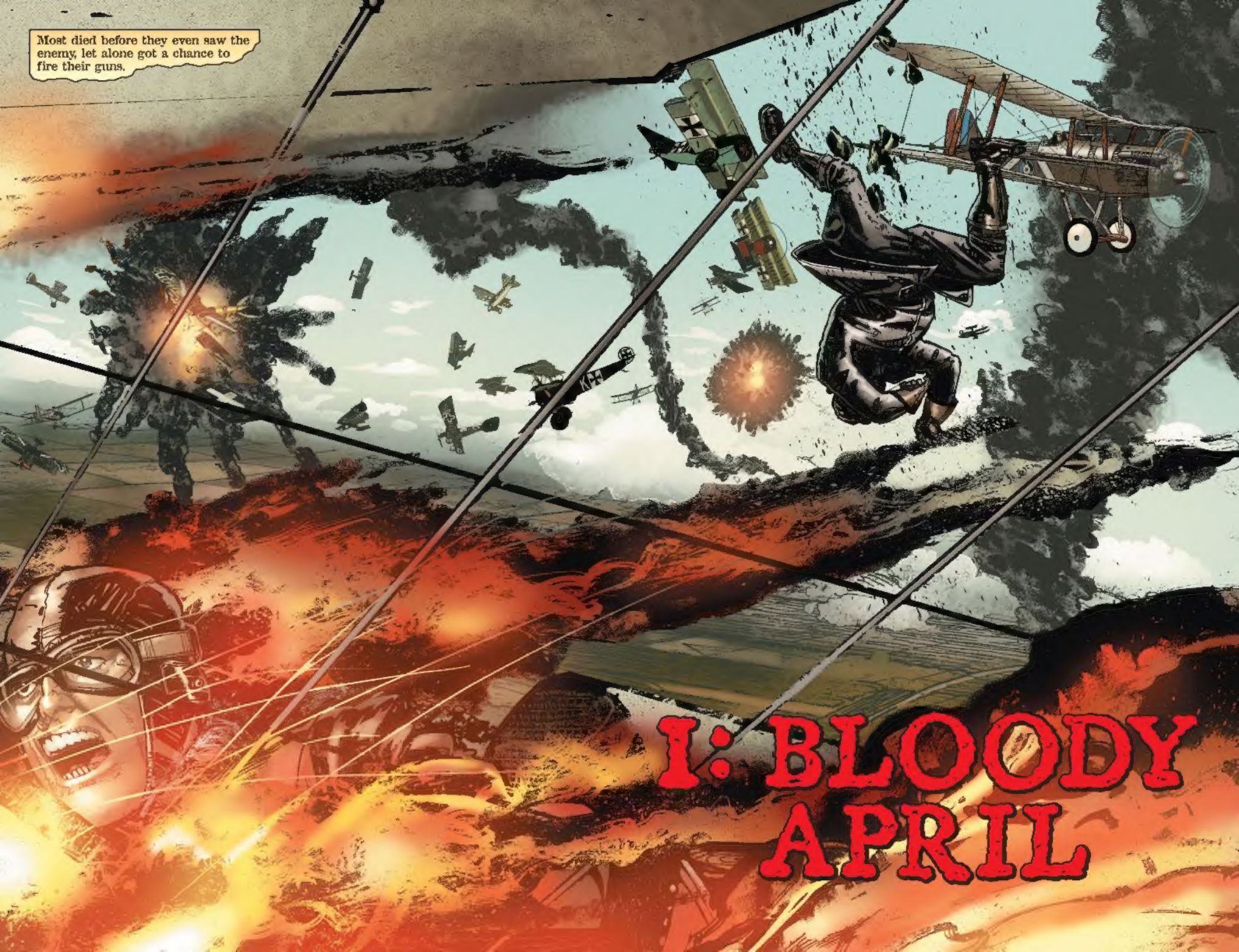
Still, the concept was only in its infancy. Pilots flew in open cockpits, lacking radios and breathing apparatus. At twenty thousand feet the cold alone could kill them. So could oxygen starvation.

Airframes were built of wood and canvas, held taut with wire, repaired with glue. Engines failed and guns misfired. Top speed — all being well — was in the region of a hundred miles an hour.

No parachutes were carried, senior commanders fearing aircraft would be abandoned prematurely.

The men who flew were very young. The lucky ones would learn the tricks that meant survival in their strange new trade. A few would rack up victories by the dozen.

Most died before they even saw the enemy, let alone got a chance to fire their guns.



**I: BLOODY
APRIL**

Spring, 1917

8,000 feet

GOD...!

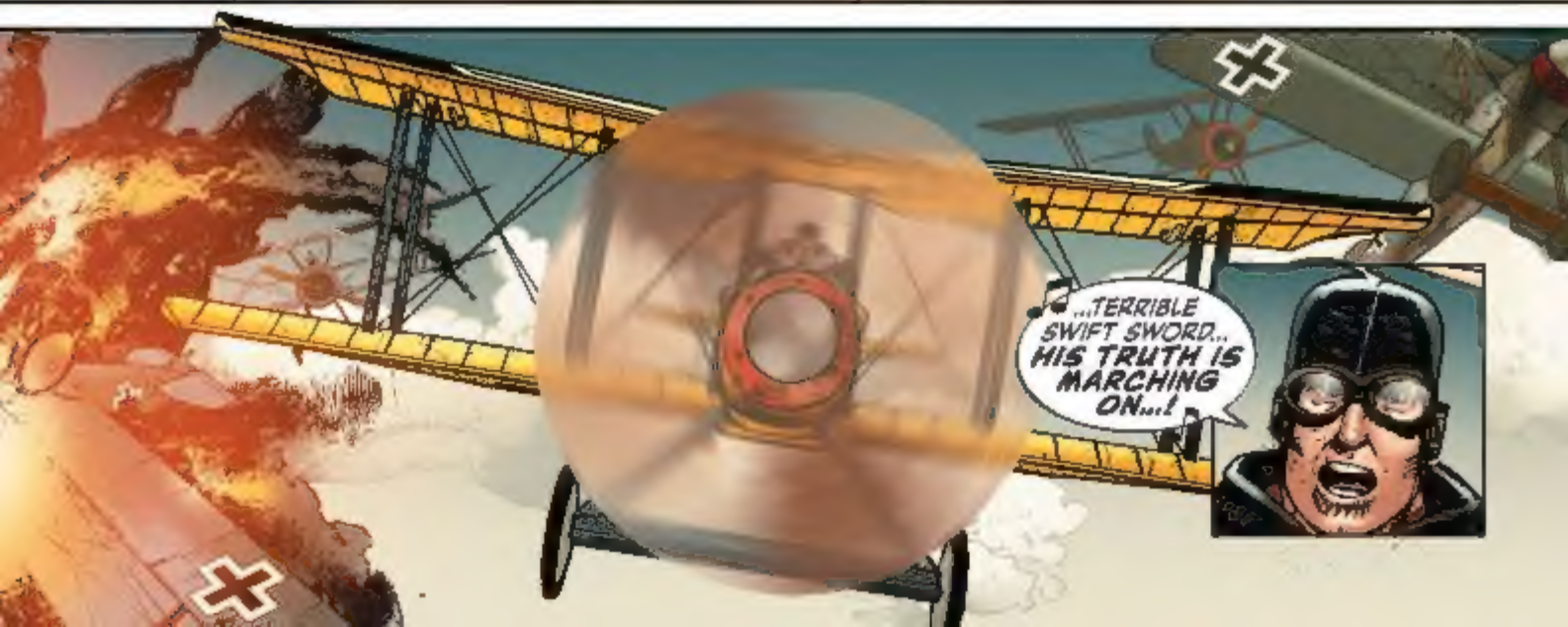
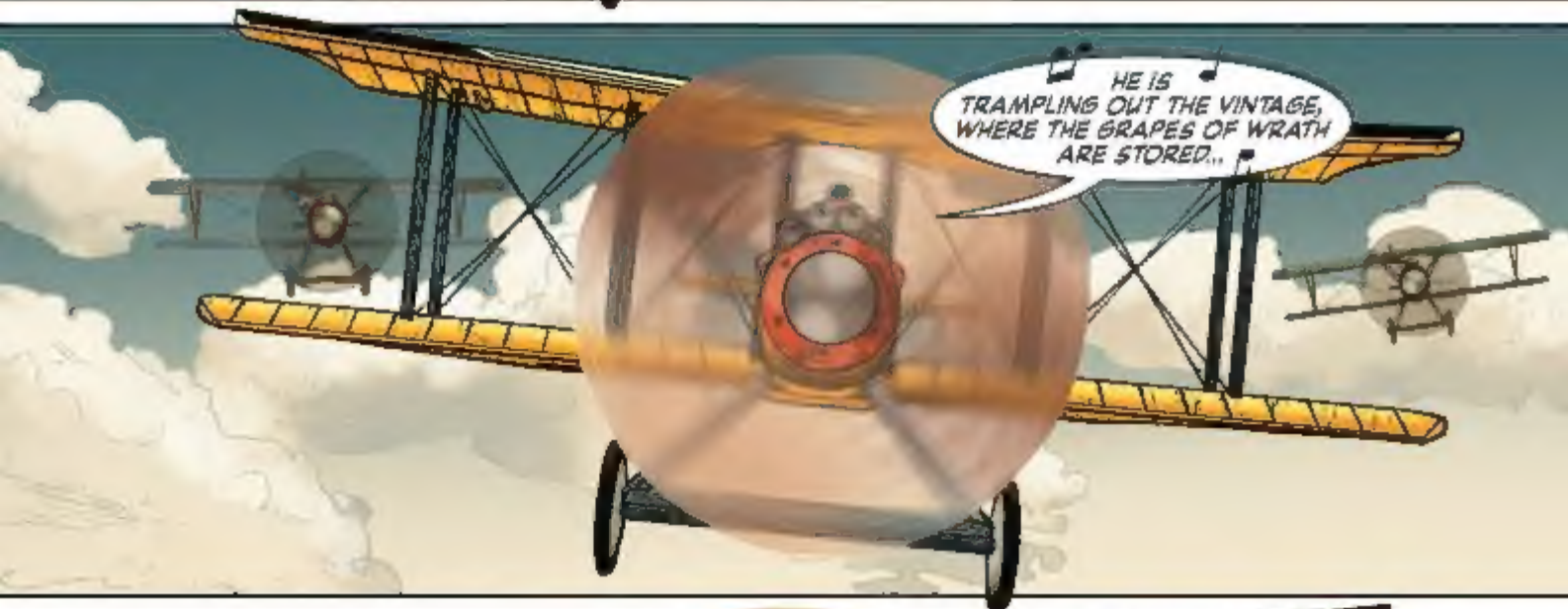


WHAT A
SKY! WHAT A
WORLD!

WHAT A
MORNING TO
BE ALIVE IN
IT--

AND TO BE A
FLIER...!









...SOME CLOT IN A SPAD
PAINTED UP LIKE A FRENCH TART.
HE WAS SHOUTING AT ME, I THINK
HE THOUGHT I COULD ACTUALLY
HEAR HIM.

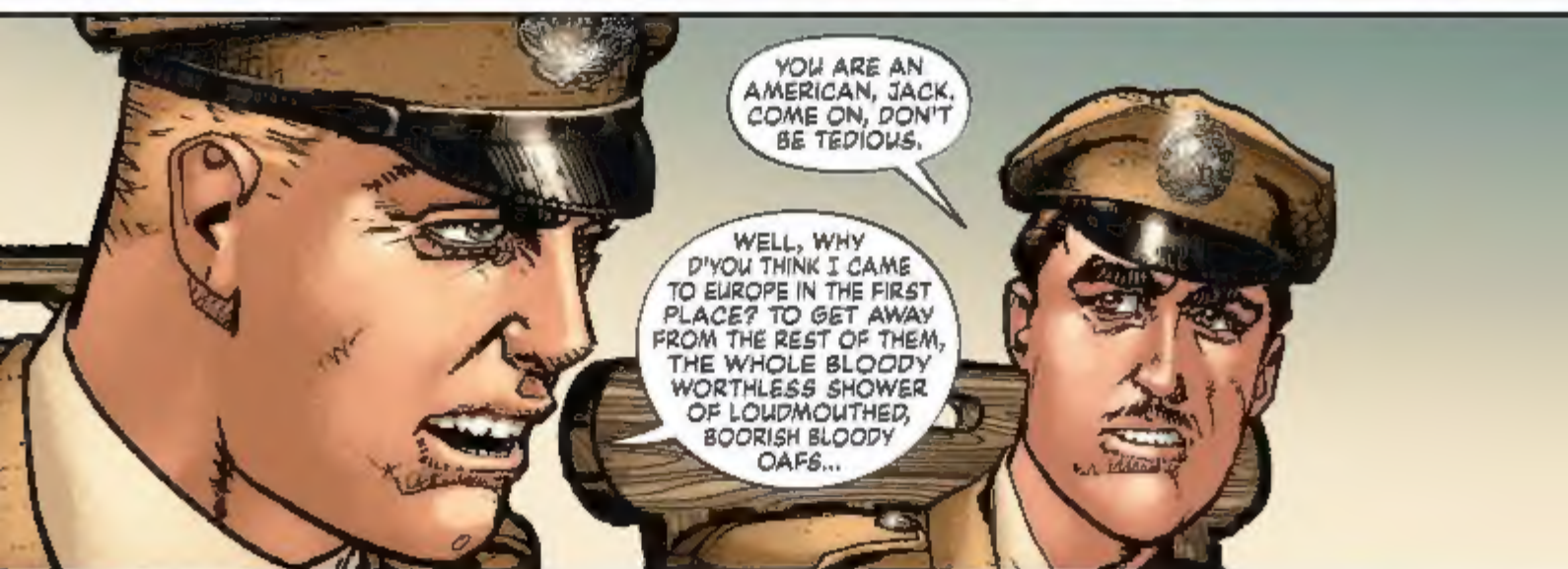
HEADED
SOUTHEAST,
THE LAST I
SAW.

ALL RIGHT, GO
AND GIVE CLARKIE
YOUR REPORT, THEN
GET SOMETHING
TO EAT.



CONGRATS ON
THE ALBATROSS TOO,
FRANKO.

I DON'T
WANT TO BE IN
AN AMERICAN
SQUADRON...



YOU ARE AN
AMERICAN, JACK.
COME ON, DON'T
BE TEDIOUS.

WELL, WHY
D'YOU THINK I CAME
TO EUROPE IN THE FIRST
PLACE? TO GET AWAY
FROM THE REST OF THEM,
THE WHOLE BLOODY
WORTHLESS SHOWER
OF LOUDMOUTHED,
BOORISH BLOODY
OAFS...



YOU MEAN YOU
DIDN'T COME HERE TO
HELP US SMITE THE
UNGODLY HUN?

WELL,
EVERYBODY'S
GOT TO HAVE
A HOBBY,
ROX...

YOUR FATHER OWNS
MOST OF MONTANA.
YOU'RE AN AMERICAN.
AMERICA JOINED
THE WAR LAST
WEEK.

NEED I
CONTINUE...?

COME ON, YOU HAVE TO ADMIT IT'S RATHER A GOOD IDEA...

HAVE I?

TAKE ALL THE YANKEE VOLUNTEERS IN THE R.F.C. AND PUT THEM IN ONE SQUADRON. THEY'RE GOOD PILOTS, THEY'LL HAVE A TON OF EXPERIENCE TO PASS ON WHEN YOUR OWN AIR CORPS GETS GOING.

WE SHOULD'VE DONE IT AGES AGO, LIKE THE FROGGIES WITH THEIR LAFAYETTE ESCADRILLE.

I WAS PERFECTLY HAPPY IN ELEVEN SQUADRON, YOU KNOW. NICE BRITISH OUTFIT.

WELL, SO WAS I. THAT'S WHY I SENT FOR YOU WHEN THEY GAVE ME THIS MOB, I WAS DAMNED IF I WAS GOING TO SUFFER ALONE.

LOOK, WING H.Q. WANTS AMERICAN PILOTS UNDER A BRITISH C.O. AND FLIGHT COMMANDERS. I THOUGHT IF YOUR CHAPS SAW THAT AT LEAST ONE FLIGHT WAS LED BY A FELLOW COUNTRYMAN, THE WHOLE THING MIGHT GO OVER RATHER MORE SMOOTHLY...

IT'S ALL A LOT OF BALLS AND YOU KNOW IT, ROX.

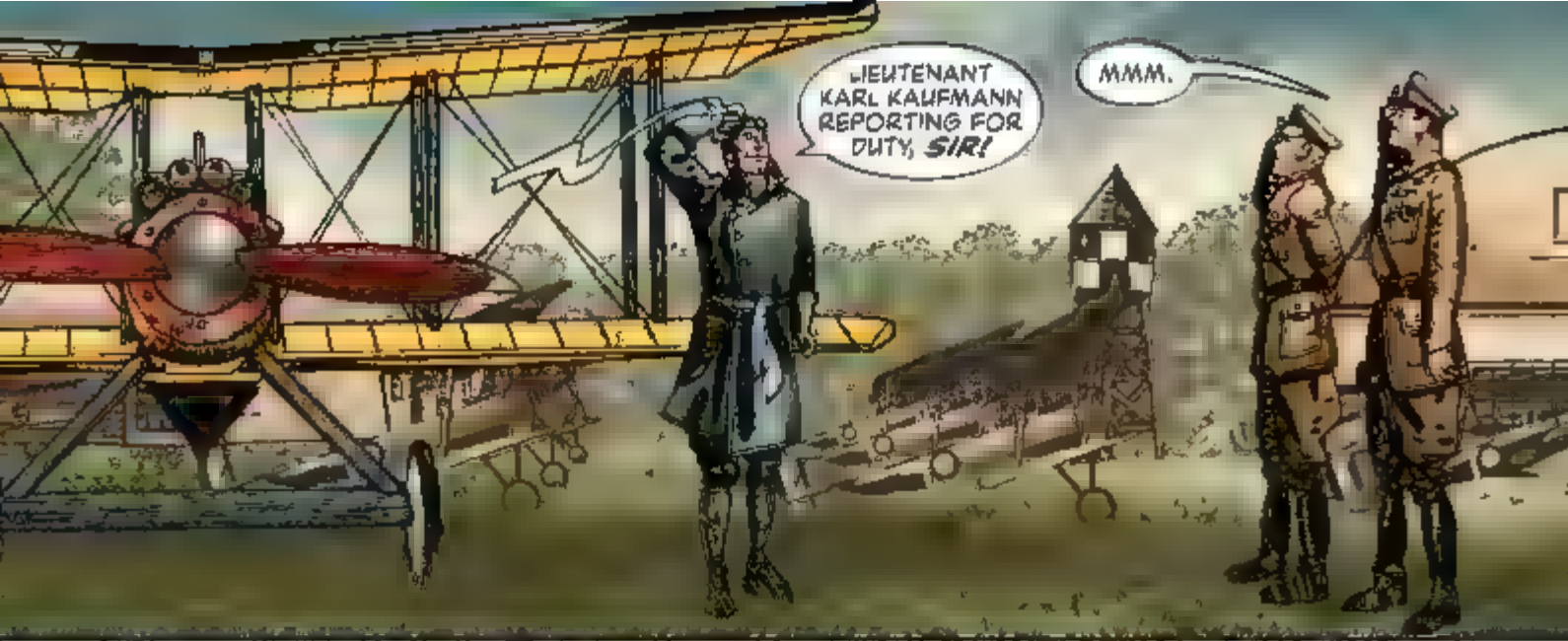
OH?

THIS BATTLE AT ARRAS SHOWS NO SIGN OF LETTING UP. WE'RE FLYING THE SOPWITH BLOODY PUP. EXPERIENCE TO PASS ON, MY ARSE--THE WHOLE SQUADRON'LL HAVE GONE WEST BEFORE THE FIRST DOUGHBOY SETS FOOT IN FLANDERS...

THE PUP'S STILL A NICE LITTLE BUS.

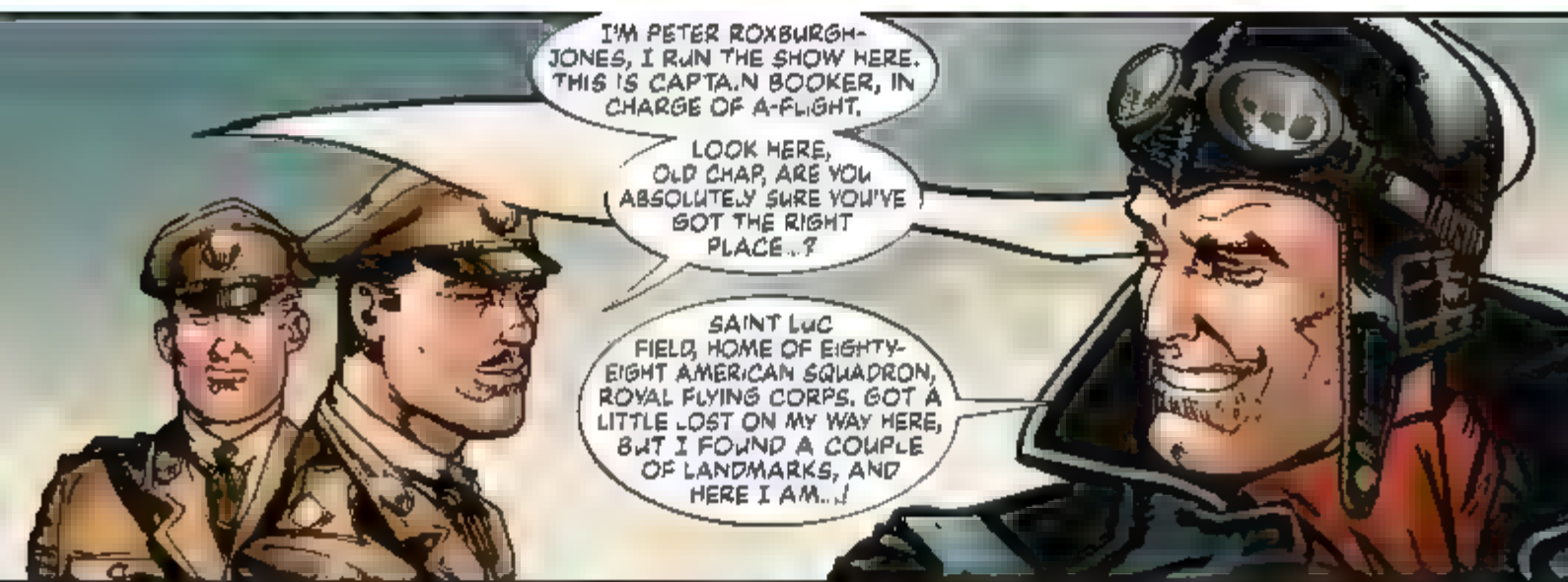
WAS A--

WHAT WAS IT FRANKO SAID? A SPAD PAINTED UP LIKE A FRENCH TART, WASN'T THAT IT?



LIEUTENANT
KARL KAUFMANN
REPORTING FOR
DUTY, SIR!

MMM.



I'M PETER ROXBURGH-
JONES, I RUN THE SHOW HERE.
THIS IS CAPTAIN BOOKER, IN
CHARGE OF A-FLIGHT.

LOOK HERE,
OLD CHAP, ARE YOU
ABSOLUTELY SURE YOU'VE
GOT THE RIGHT
PLACE..?

SAINT LUC
FIELD, HOME OF EIGHTY-
EIGHT AMERICAN SQUADRON,
ROYAL FLYING CORPS. GOT A
LITTLE LOST ON MY WAY HERE,
BUT I FOUND A COUPLE
OF LANDMARKS, AND
HERE I AM..!



NOTICE ANYTHING
ELSE ON YOUR WAY

JUST
A LOTTA SKY,
CAPTAIN.

THE THING IS, THIS
IS EIGHTY-EIGHT SQUADRON,
ALL RIGHT. BUT WE'VE A FULL
COMPLEMENT OF PILOTS AND
WE HAVEN'T ASKED FOR ANY
REPLACEMENTS, SO..



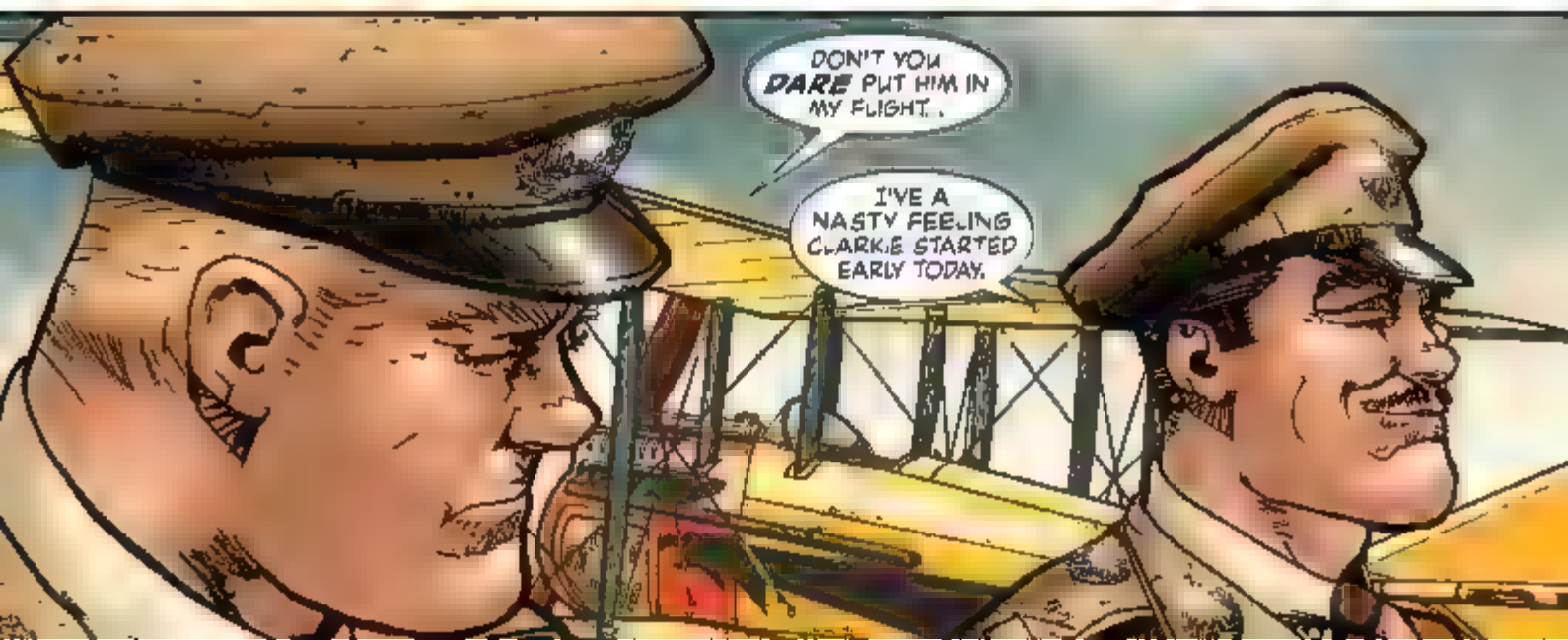
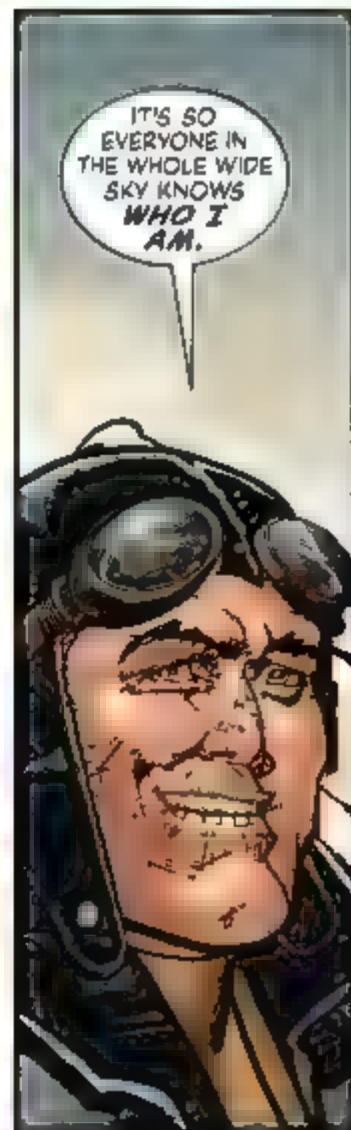
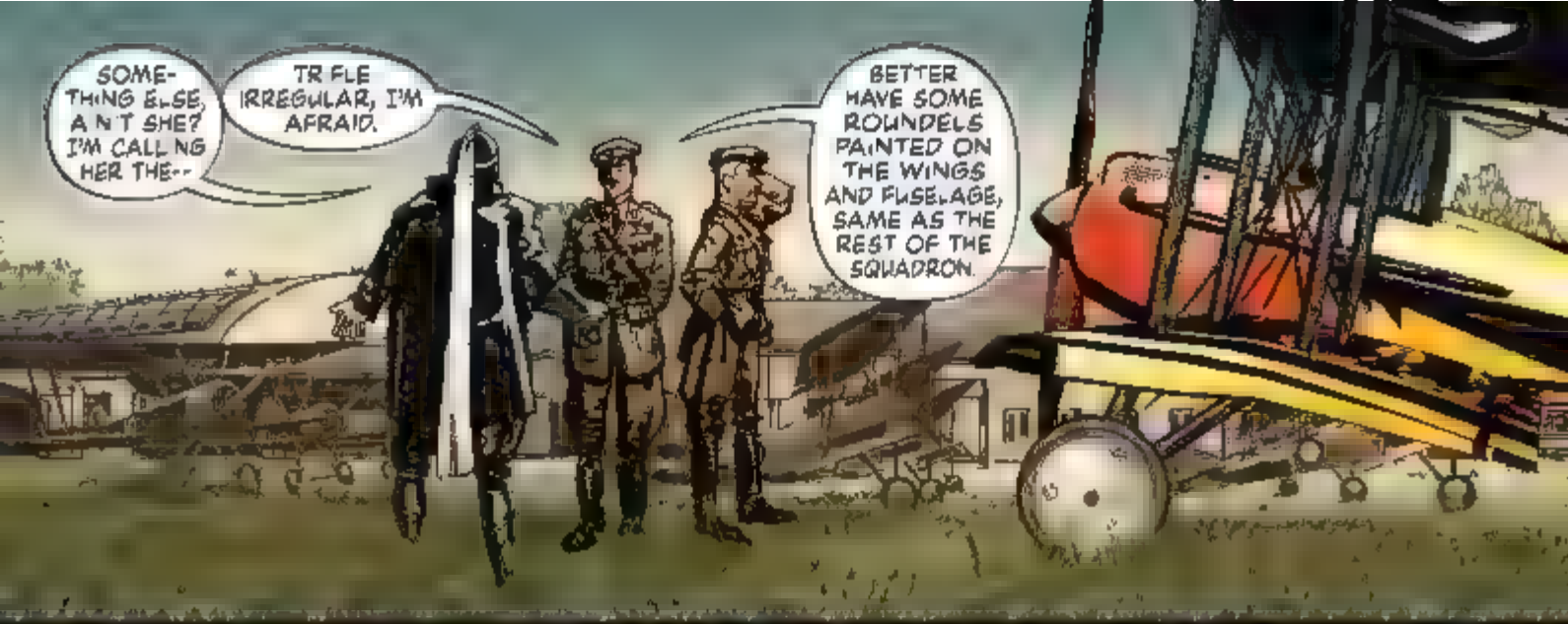
THIS IS WHERE
THEY SENT ME, MAJOR
GOT A WRITTEN ORDER
TELLING ME TO REPORT
HERE

IN THAT?

SPAD SEVEN.
BEST DAMN PLANE
ON THE WESTERN
FRONT.

YES, BUT WE
FLY THE PUP. WE'VE NO
SPARES FOR YOUR SPAD,
NOR ANY MECHANICS
QUALIFIED TO SERVICE
IT.

AND WHY
HAVE YOU GOT IT
PAINTED LIKE..
LIKE..





CARE
FOR A *DRINK*,
LEUTENANT...?

LITTLE EARLY
FOR ME, CAPTAIN
THE C.O. TOLD ME TO
REPORT TO YOUR
OFFICE.

NEVER TOO
EARLY FOR A LITTLE
PRICK-ME-UP. A LITTLE PICK-
ME-UP, OLD BOY. LET'S HAVE
A LOOK AT THIS PIECE OF
PAPER OF YOURS.

WOULD
YOU CARE FOR
A DRINK, BY THE
WAY?



UH
NO THANK YOU,
SIR.

LITTLE
SNIFFER NEVER
DID ANYONE ANY
HARM. HMM.

DOESN'T
LOOK LIKE
AN OFFICIAL
SIGNAL.



WELL, THAT'S
WHAT THEY GAVE ME,
SIR. CAN I HAVE IT
BACK?

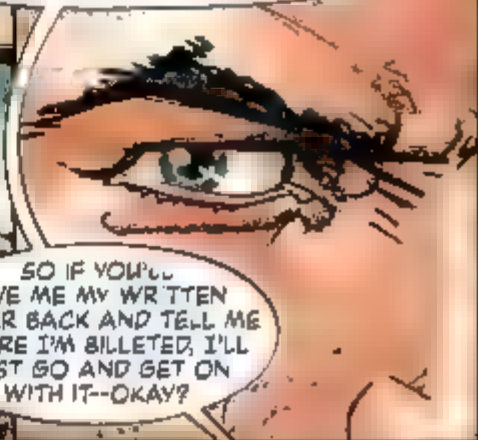
TELL YOU WHAT,
WHY DON'T I HAND *IT* TO
AND TELEPHONE WING, EH? IF
THERE'S BEEN SOME SORT OF
COCK-UP, I'M SURE THEY CAN
UNTANGLE IT FOR YOU.

OH, I'M
SORRY, RUDE OF
ME NOT TO OFFER:
CARE FOR A
DRINK?

NO,
SIR, NO THANK
YOU.

SIR, I CAME HERE TO
FIGHT THE GERMANS--WHICH I FIGURE
DOESN'T REQUIRE A WHOLE HELL OF
A LOT OF PAPERWORK, OKAY?

SO IF YOU'LL
GIVE ME MY WRITTEN
ORDER BACK AND TELL ME
WHERE I'M BILLETED, I'LL
JUST GO AND GET ON
WITH IT--OKAY?



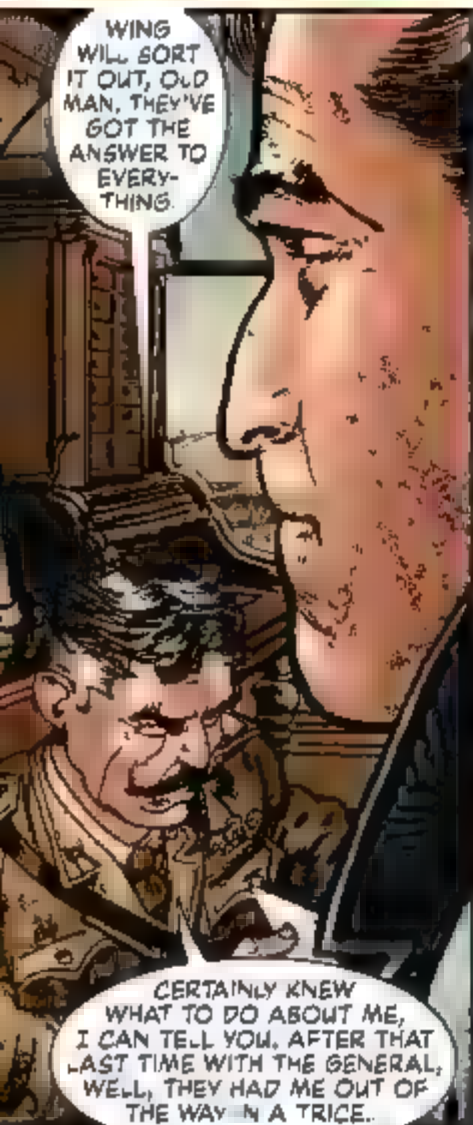


STOUT FELLOW...!

KEEN AS MUSTARD, EH? THE BLOODY BOCHE WON'T STAND A CHANCE! TELL YOU WHAT, WOULD YOU CARE FOR A DRINK TO SET THE SEAL ON IT?

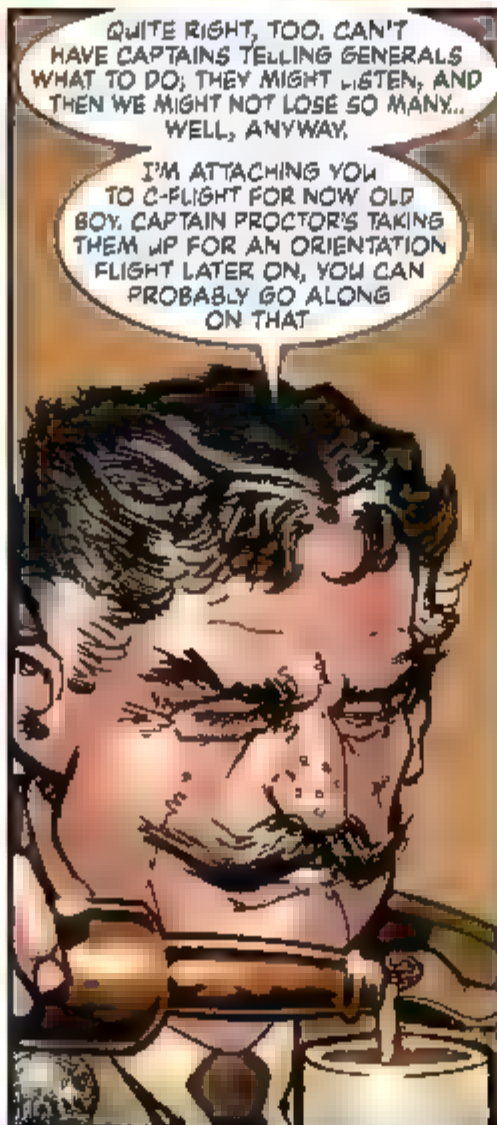
OH, JESUS CHRIST--!

CAPTAIN CLARK, PLEASE, ALL I WANT TO DO S--



WING WILL SORT IT OUT, OLD MAN, THEY'VE GOT THE ANSWER TO EVERYTHING.

CERTAINLY KNEW WHAT TO DO ABOUT ME, I CAN TELL YOU. AFTER THAT LAST TIME WITH THE GENERAL, WELL, THEY HAD ME OUT OF THE WAY IN A TRICE.



QUITE RIGHT, TOO. CAN'T HAVE CAPTAINS TELLING GENERALS WHAT TO DO; THEY MIGHT LISTEN, AND THEN WE MIGHT NOT LOSE SO MANY... WELL, ANYWAY,

I'M ATTACHING YOU TO C-FLIGHT FOR NOW OLD BOY. CAPTAIN PROCTOR'S TAKING THEM UP FOR AN ORIENTATION FLIGHT LATER ON, YOU CAN PROBABLY GO ALONG ON THAT



THAT'S GREAT, SIR. ARE YOU SURE YOU CAN'T JUST GIVE ME--

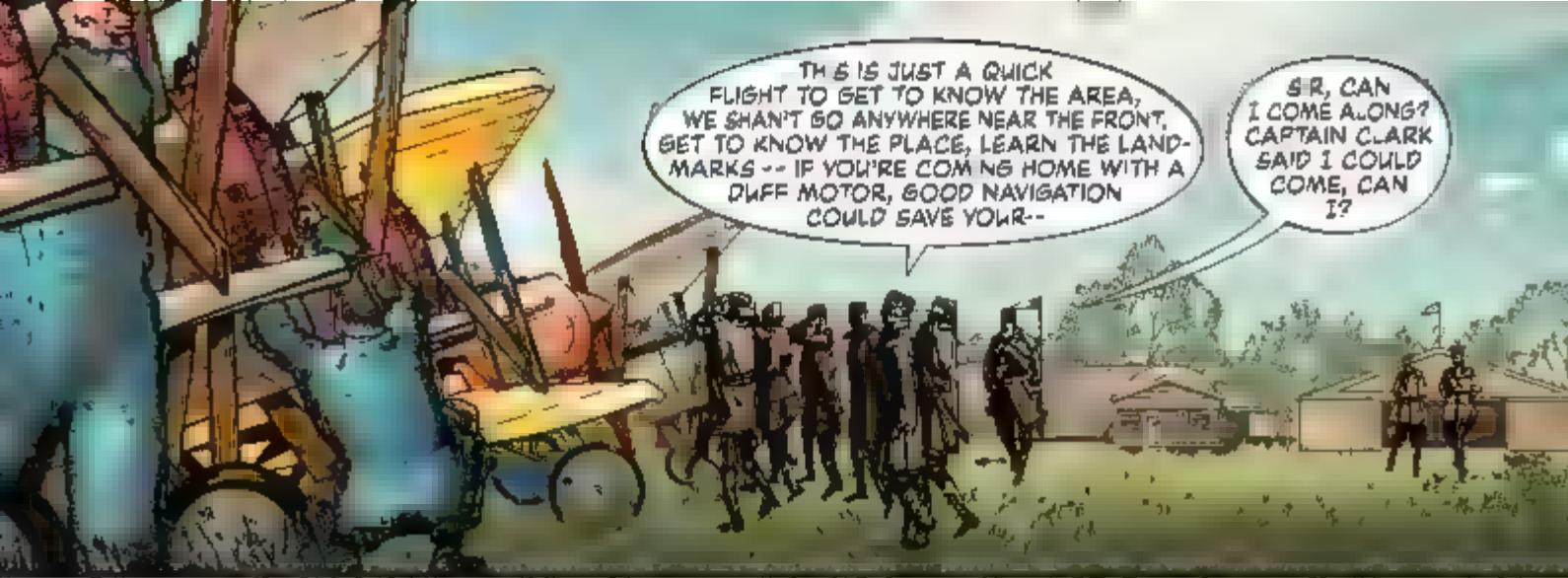
A DRINK? WHY OF COURSE, OLD LAD!

GOD, I'M APPALLING, HERE I SIT WITH THE BOTTLE IN MY HAND AND I HAVEN'T EVEN OFFERED YOU A--



SHIT, SHIT, SHIT.

WHAT AM I GOING TO DO...?



THIS IS JUST A QUICK FLIGHT TO GET TO KNOW THE AREA, WE SHAN'T GO ANYWHERE NEAR THE FRONT, GET TO KNOW THE PLACE, LEARN THE LANDMARKS -- IF YOU'RE COMING HOME WITH A DUFF MOTOR, GOOD NAVIGATION COULD SAVE YOUR--

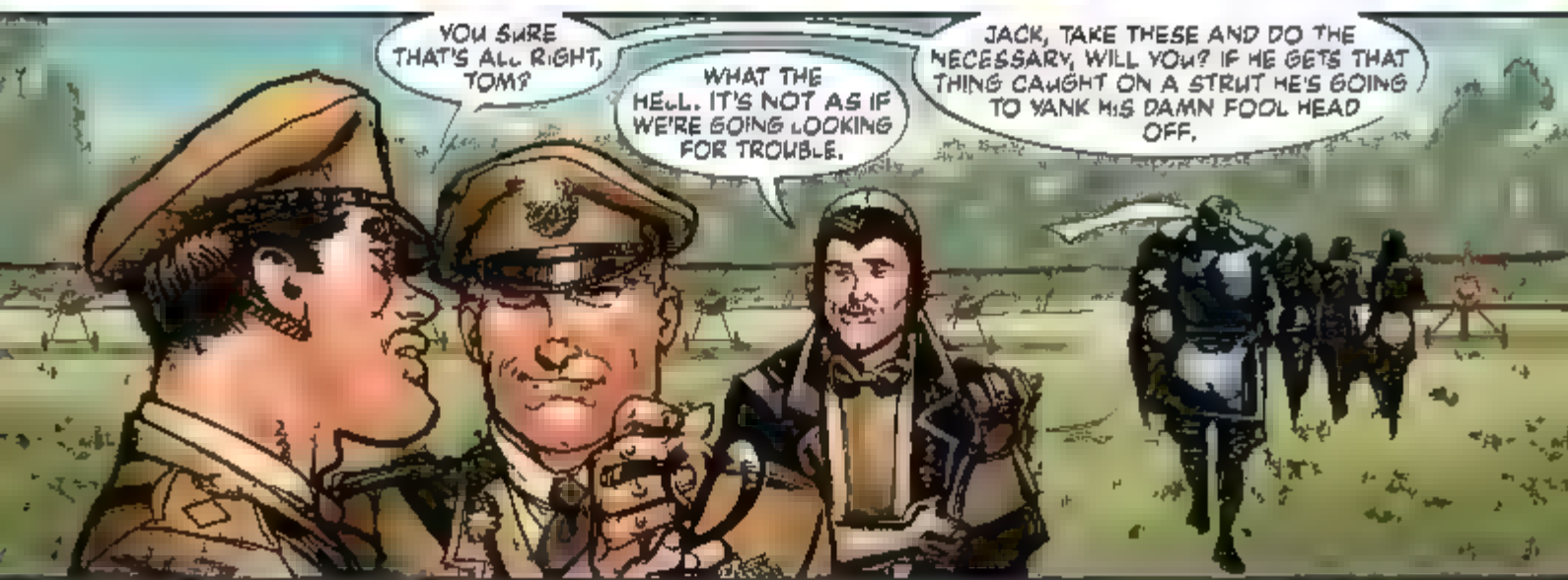
SIR, CAN I COME ALONG? CAPTAIN CLARK SAID I COULD COME, CAN I?



CAPTAIN PROCTOR'S LEADING THIS ONE, LIEUTENANT

SIR, CAN--

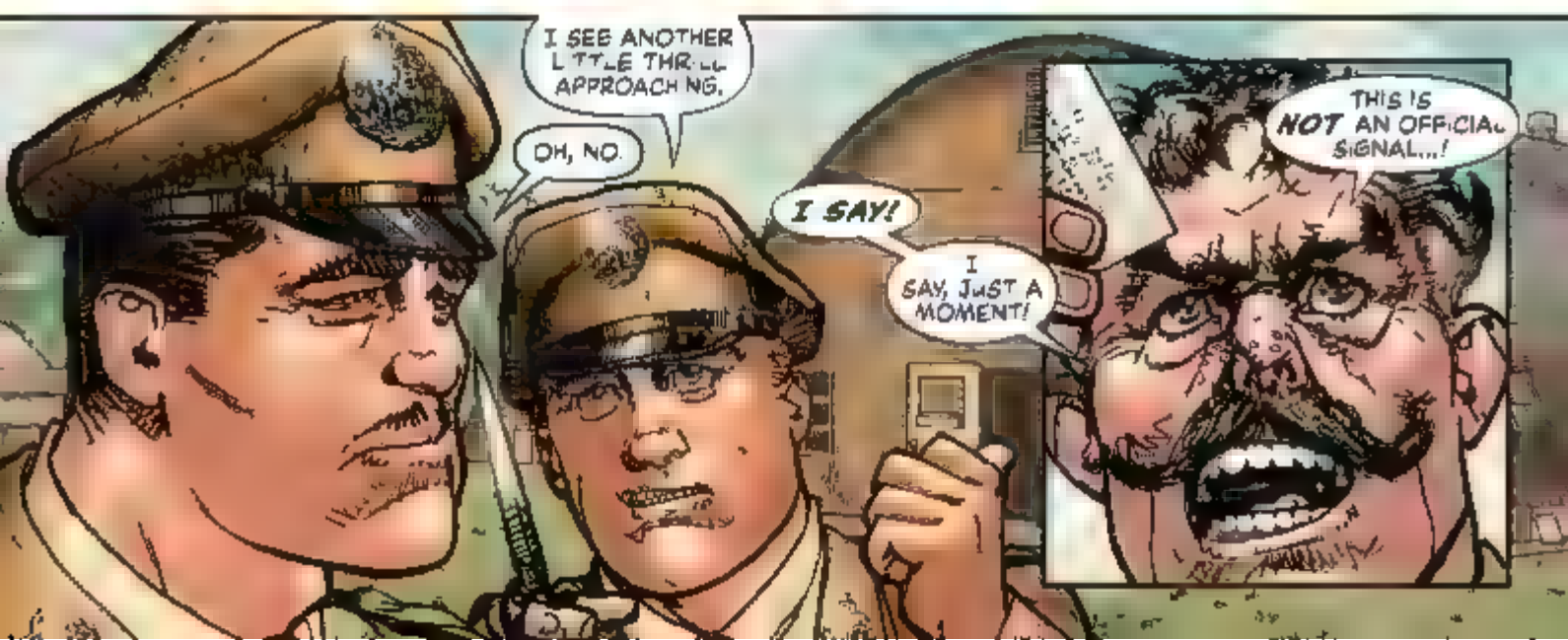
AS LONG AS YOU CAN MAINTAIN FORMATION IN THAT SPAD, DON'T WANDER OFF, YOU HAVE TO BE ABLE TO SEE MY SIGNALS.



YOU SURE THAT'S ALL RIGHT, TOM?

WHAT THE HELL. IT'S NOT AS IF WE'RE GOING LOOKING FOR TROUBLE.

JACK, TAKE THESE AND DO THE NECESSARY, WILL YOU? IF HE GETS THAT THING CAUGHT ON A STRUT HE'S GOING TO YANK HIS DAMN FOOL HEAD OFF.



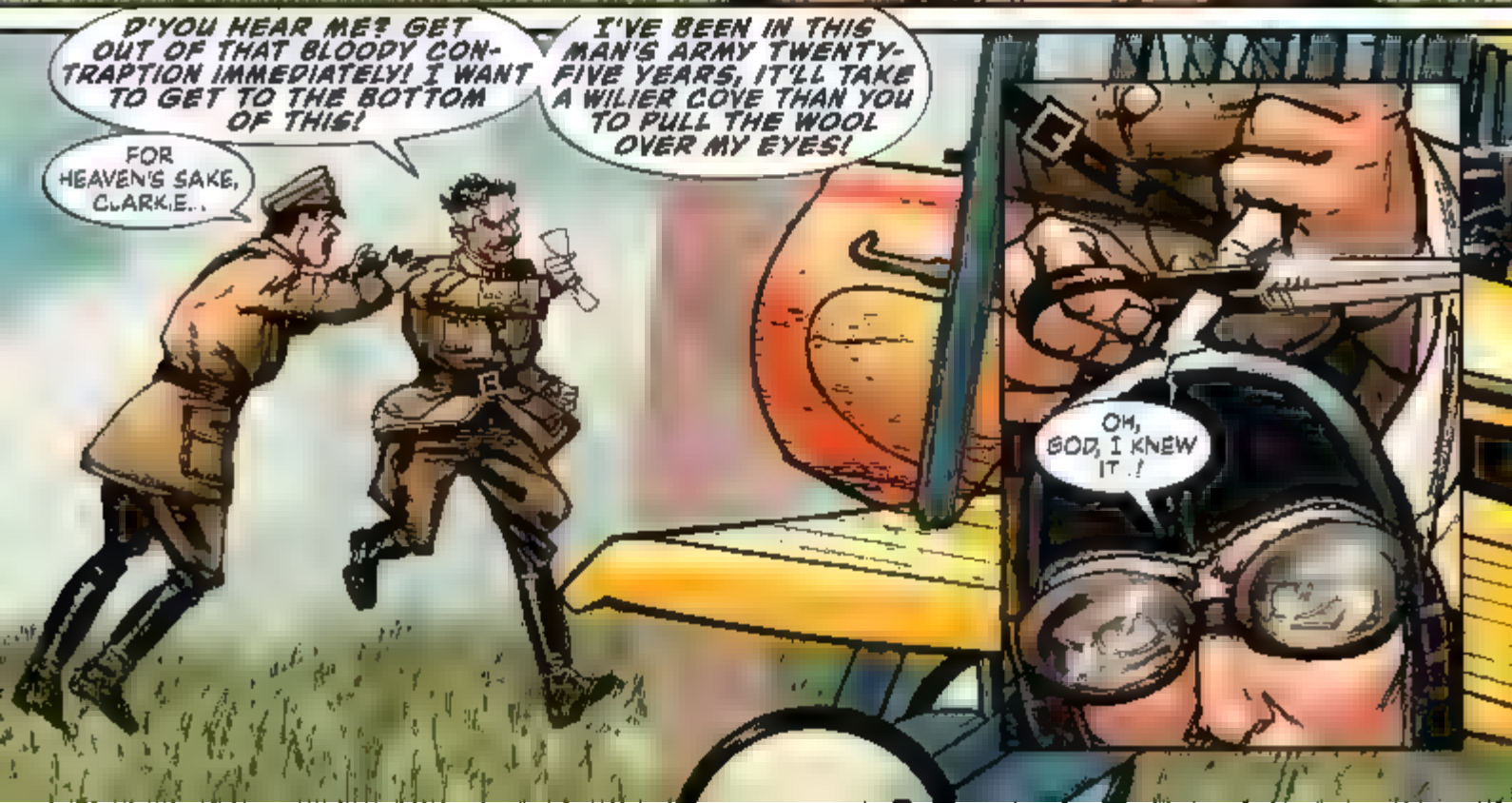
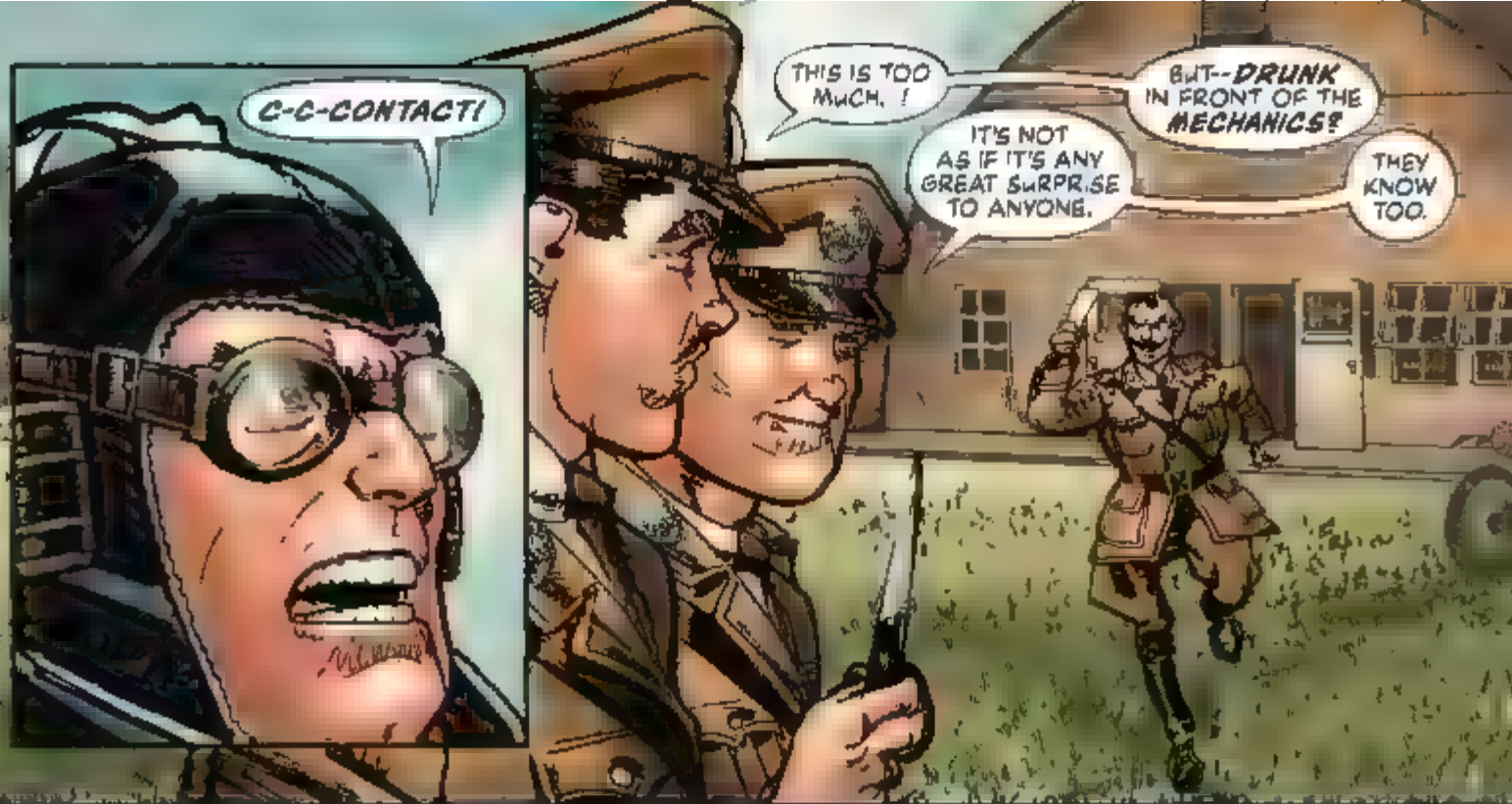
I SEE ANOTHER LITTLE THRILL APPROACHING.

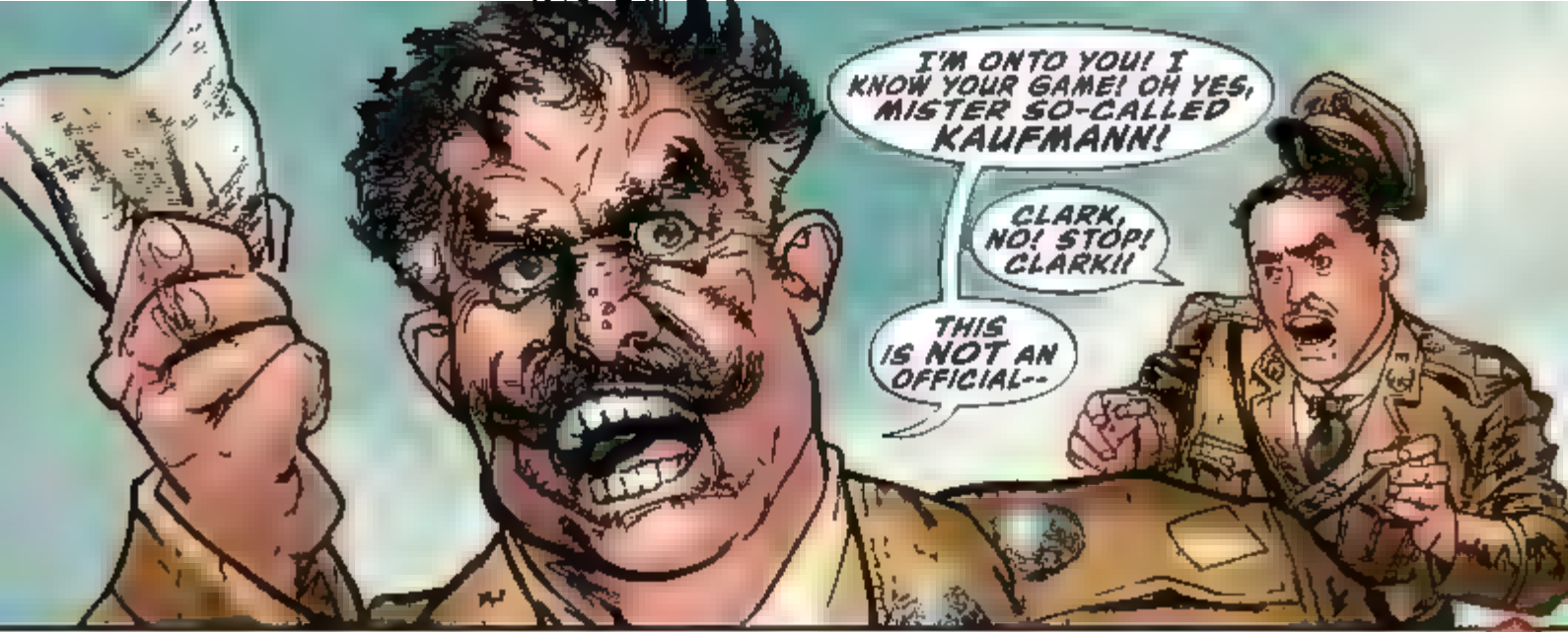
OH, NO.

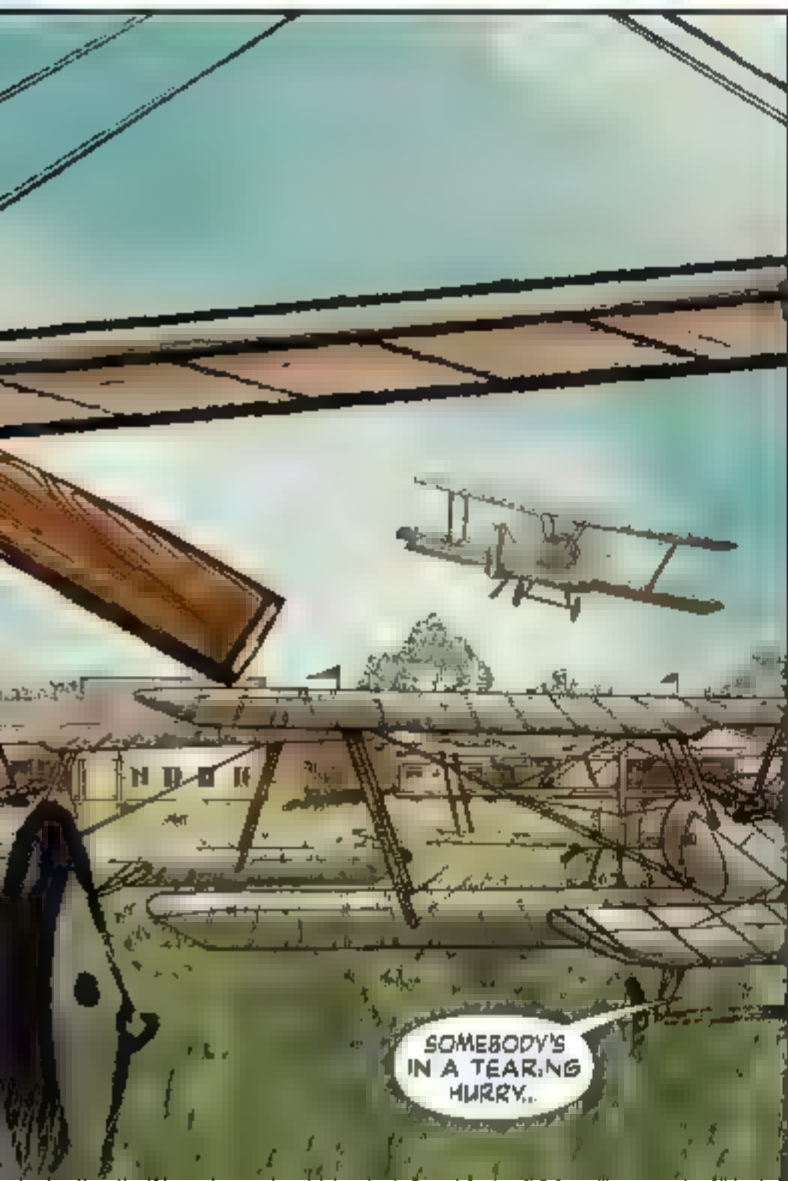
I SAY!

I SAY, JUST A MOMENT!

THIS IS NOT AN OFFICIAL SIGNAL...!







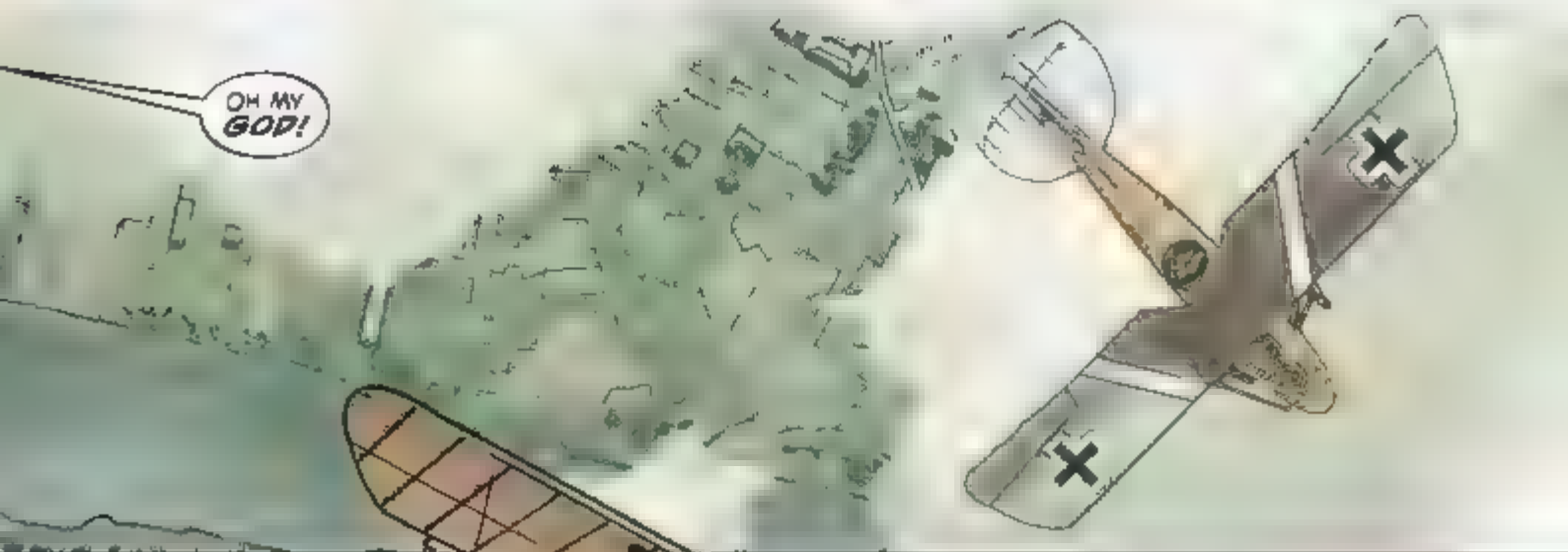




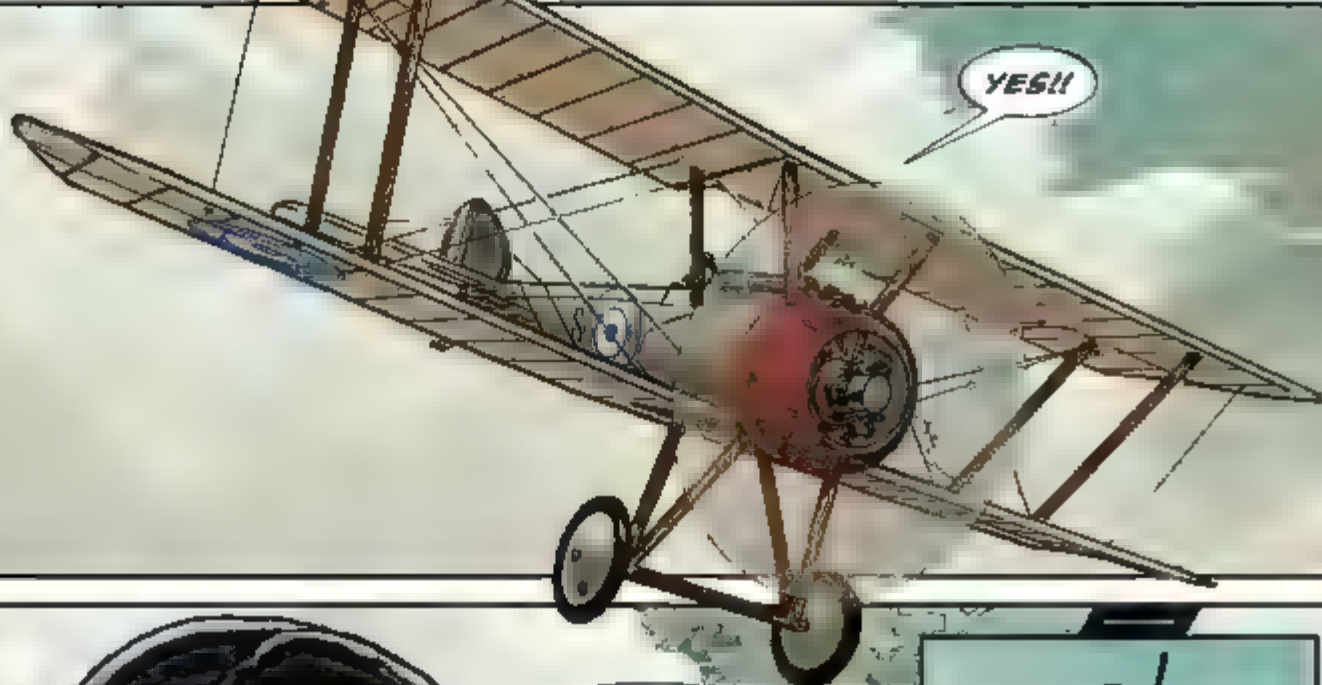
WHERE
THE HELL
DID--

HEY.

OH MY
GOD...



OH MY
GOD!



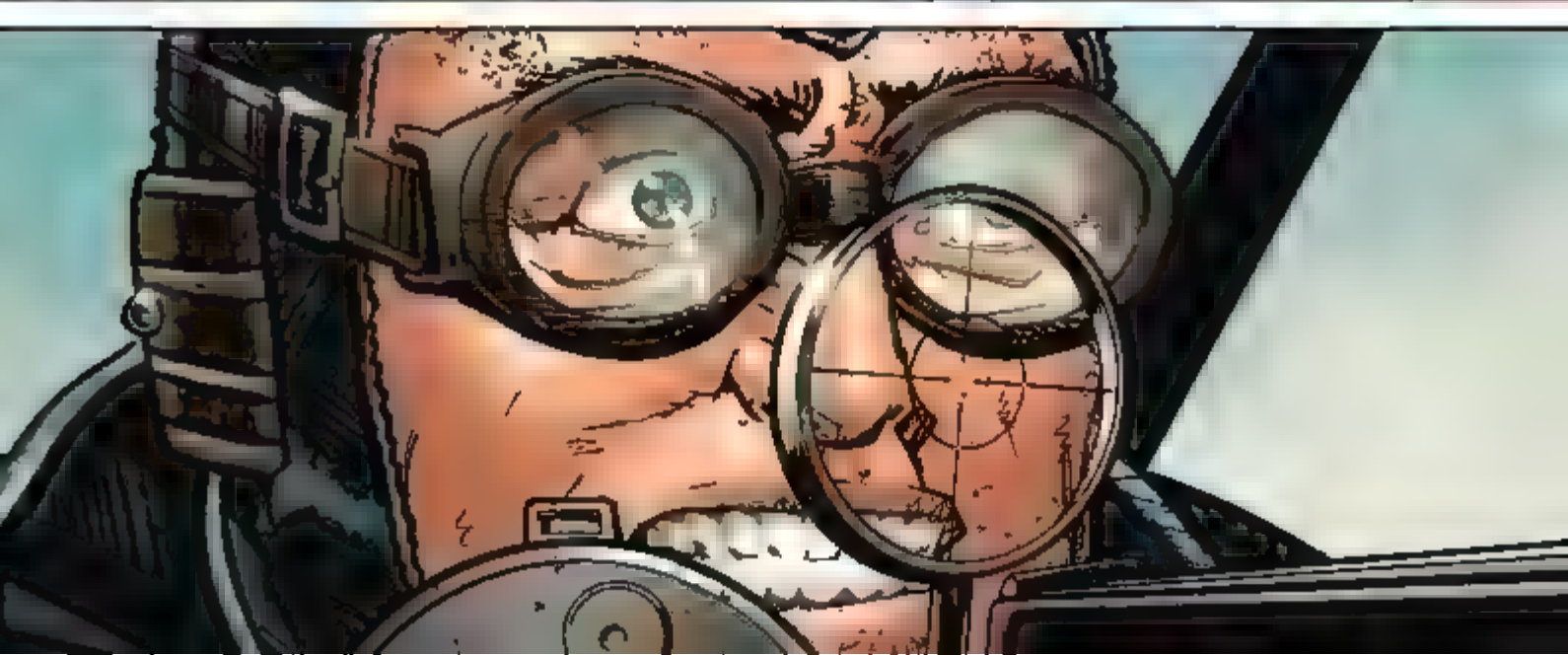
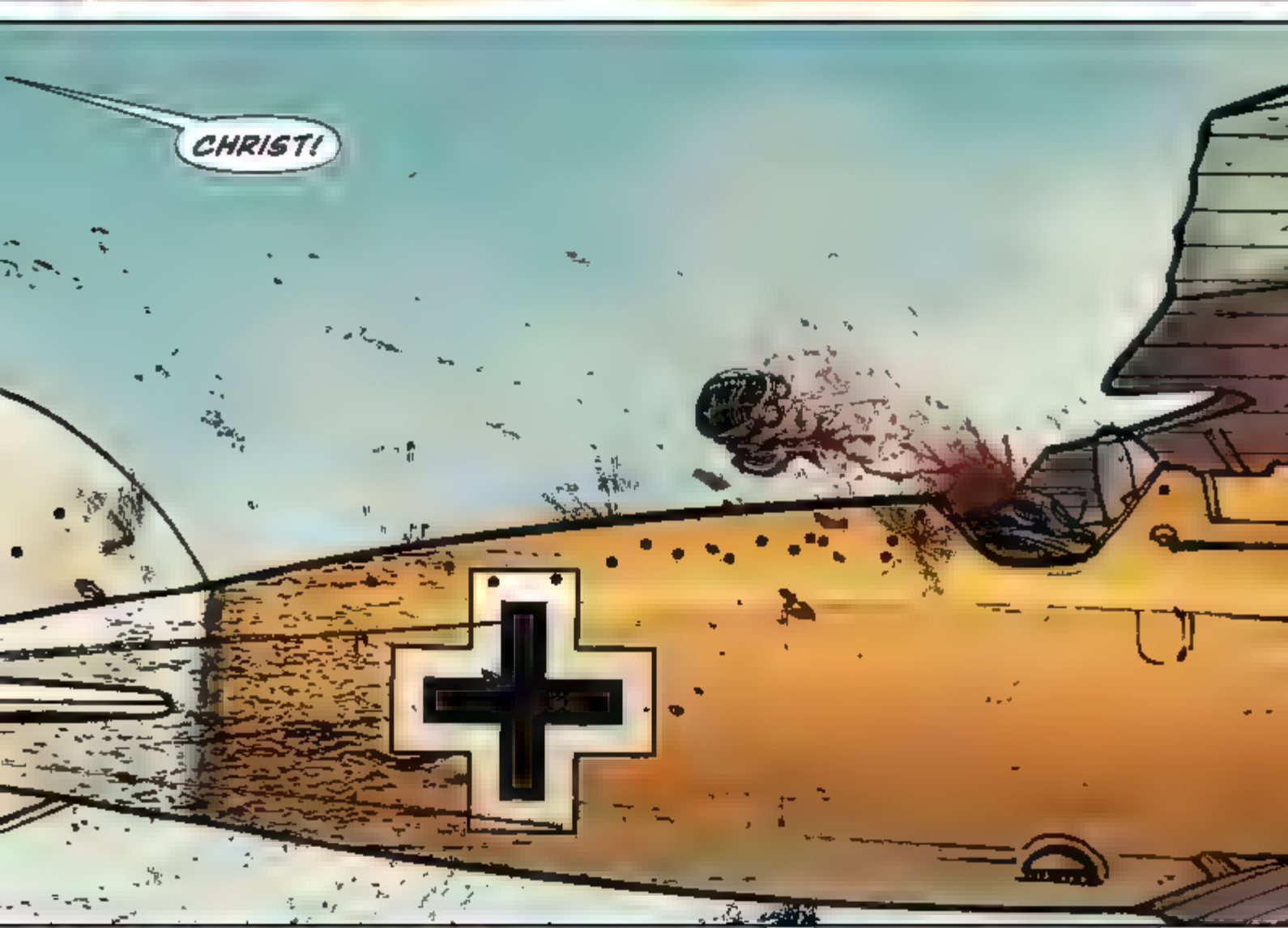
YES!!



THIS IS IT,
HOLY JESUS, THIS IS
REALLY IT--!



COME ON,
DUMMY, DEFEND
YOURSELF! MAKE A
FIGHT OF IT!





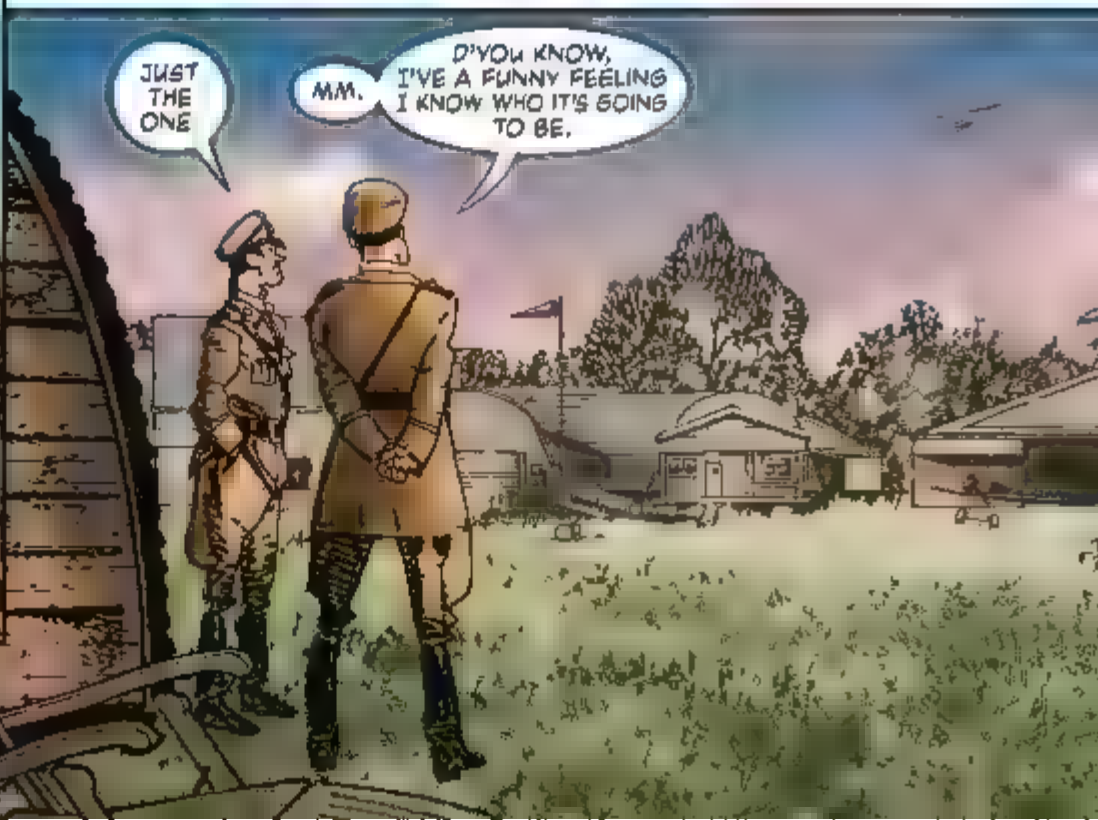
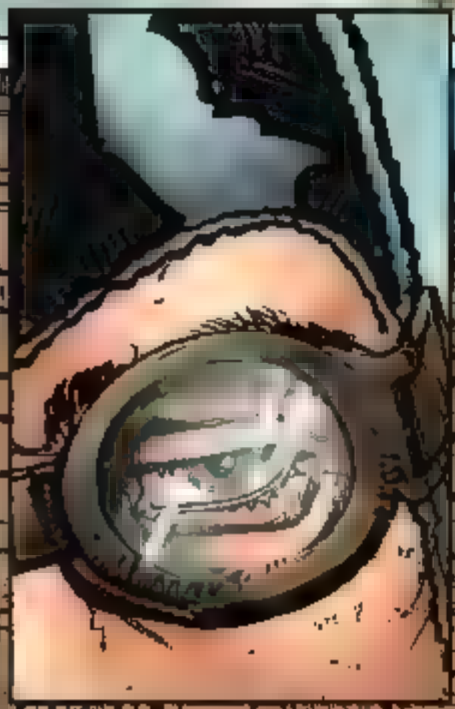
OH GOD,
IT'S HORRIBLE! *IT'S*
HORRIBLE!



YOU WERE
SUPPOSED TO *FIGHT!*
YOU WEREN'T MEANT TO
JUST--JUST--!



OH, CHR ST. !



JUST
THE
ONE

MM.
D'YOU KNOW,
I'VE A FUNNY FEELING
I KNOW WHO IT'S GOING
TO BE.

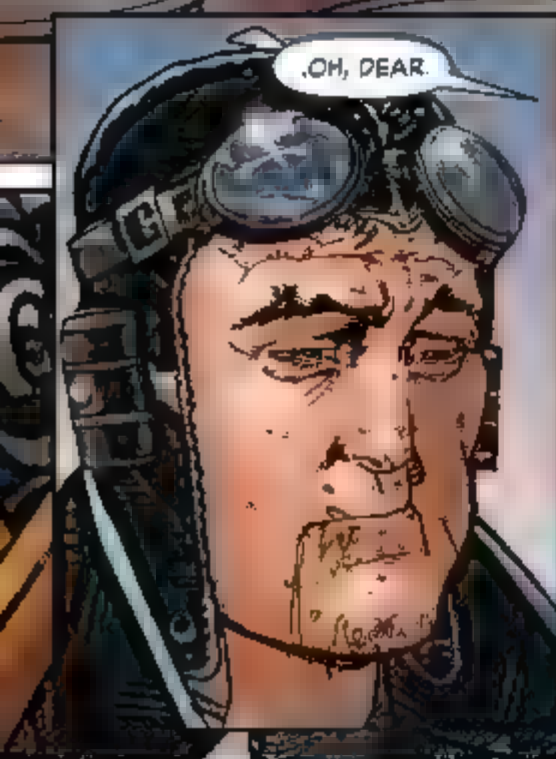


LOSE THE OTHERS?

YES.

IN CLOUD, NO DOUBT.

YES.



.OH, DEAR.

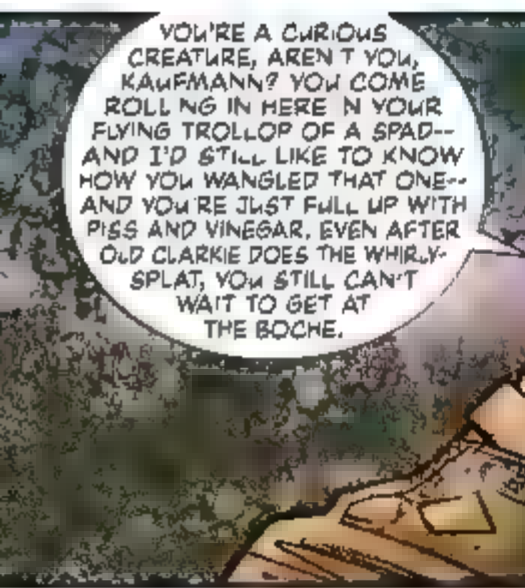


STANDARD PRACTICE IN THE CIRCUS IS TO BUY THE VICTIM A DRINK, BUT WE'LL FORGO THAT IF YOU DON'T FEEL UP TO IT.



I THINK I'D LIKE A DRINK.

SO SHALL IT BE.

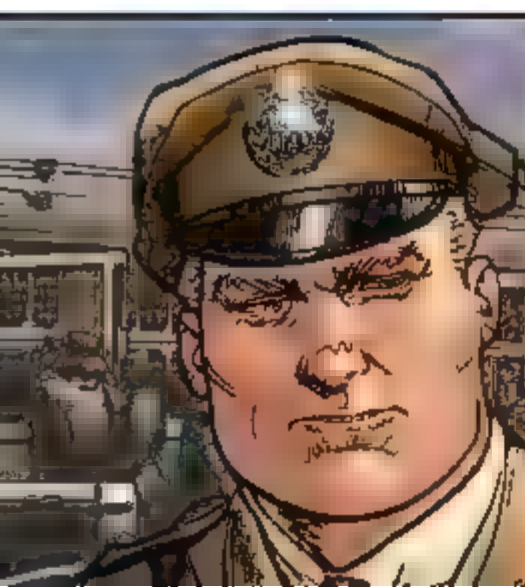


YOU'RE A CURIOUS CREATURE, AREN'T YOU, KAUFMANN? YOU COME ROLLING IN HERE IN YOUR FLYING TROLLOP OF A SPAD-- AND I'D STILL LIKE TO KNOW HOW YOU WANGLED THAT ONE-- AND YOU'RE JUST FULL UP WITH PISS AND VINEGAR, EVEN AFTER OLD CLARKIE DOES THE WHIRLY-SPLAT, YOU STILL CAN'T WAIT TO GET AT THE BOCHE.



IT'S AS IF YOU'RE FIGHTING YOUR VERY OWN PRIVATE--

AM I THE FIRST ONE HOME?



THE FIRST AND THE LAST, I'M AFRAID. THE OTHERS ARE GONE.

GONE?

AS IN NOT COMING BACK.

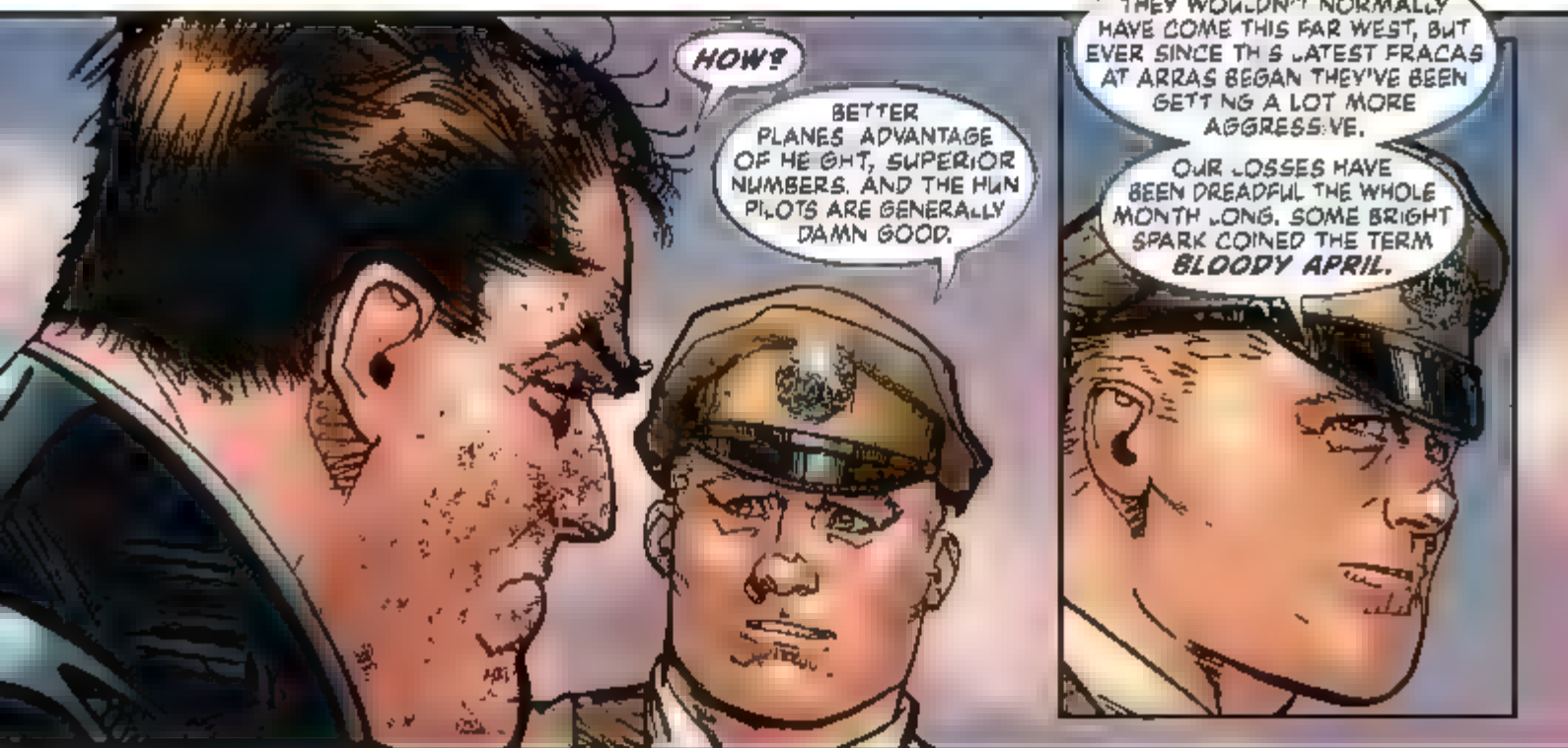




DO YOU
MEAN TO TELL
ME--

THE ARMY REPORTED
SEEING FIVE PUPS GET BOUNCED
BY A COUPLE OF DOZEN ALBATROSS.
SOMEBODY POTTED ONE BEFORE
THEY WERE SWAMPED. PROBABLY
POOR OLD TOMMY
PROCTOR.

FIVE DOWN
IN FLAMES, NO
SURVIVORS.



HOW?

BETTER
PLANES ADVANTAGE
OF HEIGHT, SUPERIOR
NUMBERS. AND THE HUN
PILOTS ARE GENERALLY
DAMN GOOD.

THEY WOULDN'T NORMALLY
HAVE COME THIS FAR WEST, BUT
EVER SINCE THE LATEST FRACAS
AT ARRAS BEGAN THEY'VE BEEN
GETTING A LOT MORE
AGGRESSIVE.

OUR LOSSES HAVE
BEEN DREADFUL THE WHOLE
MONTH LONG. SOME BRIGHT
SPARK COINED THE TERM
BLOODY APRIL.

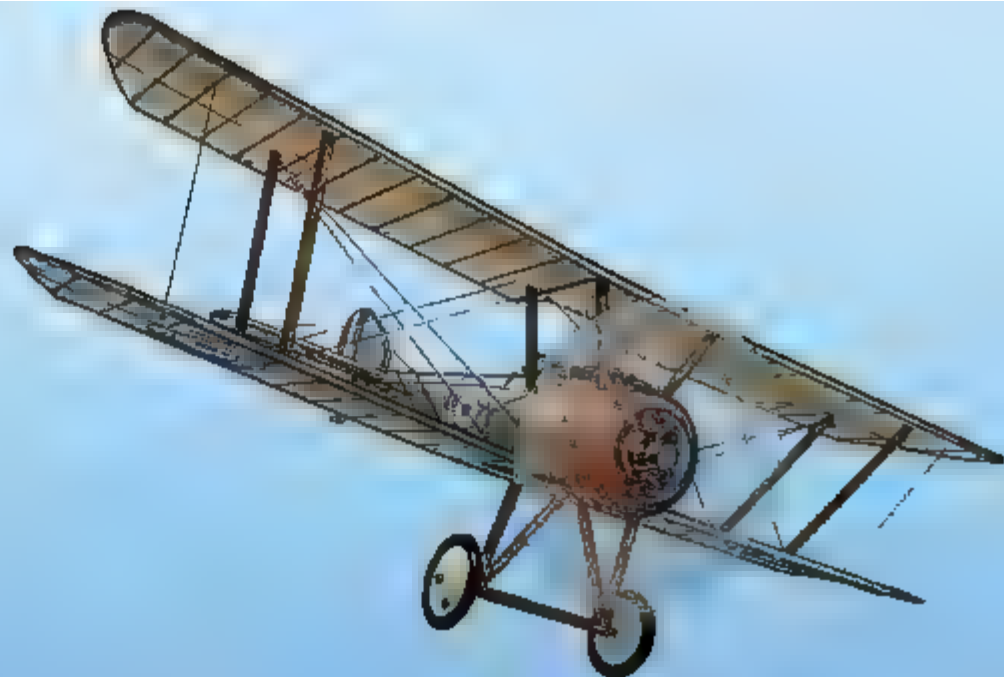


NOT HOW
YOU EXPECTED
THINGS WOULD
BE, EH?

DON'T
WORRY, OLD
BOY.

THEY
RARELY ARE
AROUND
HERE.

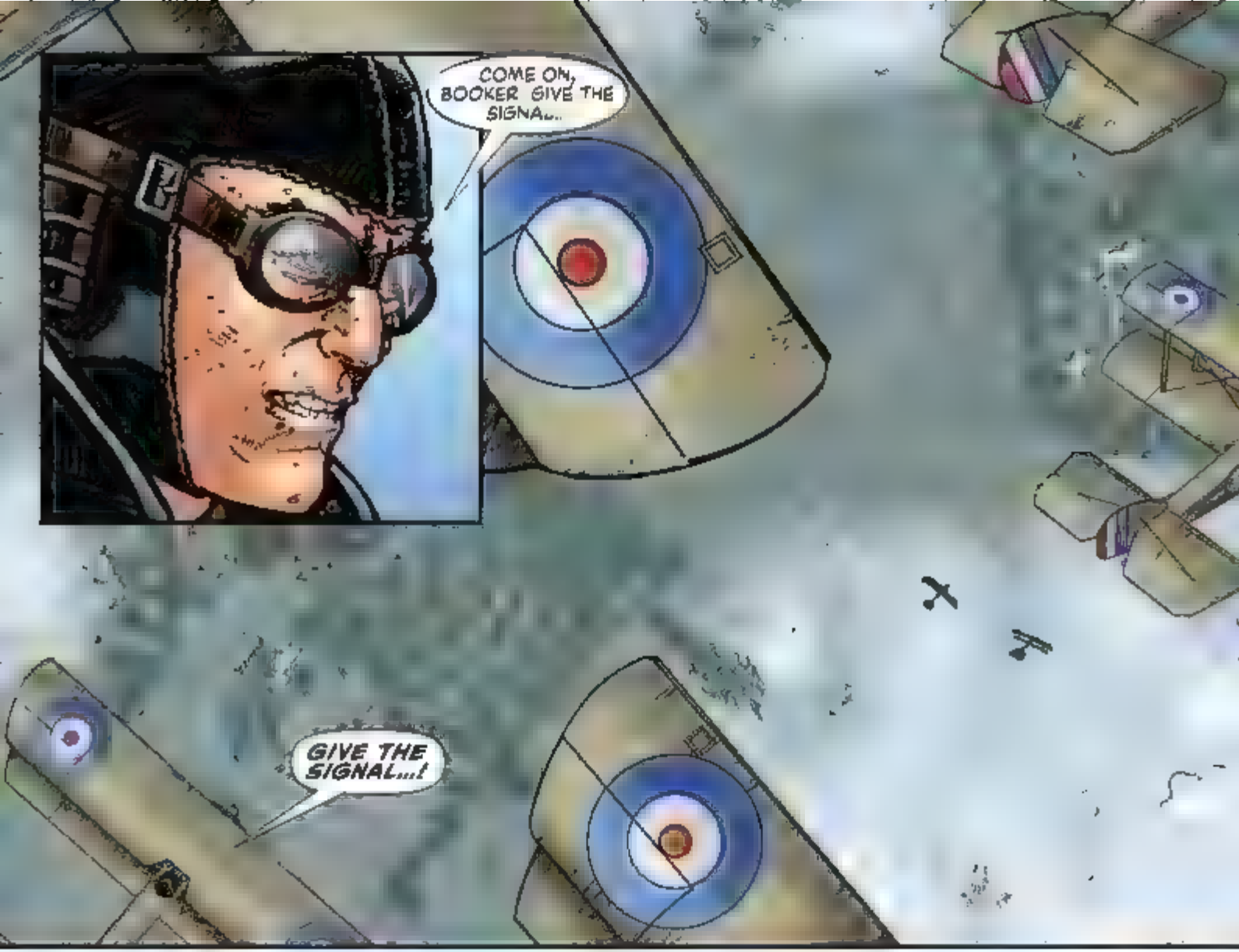


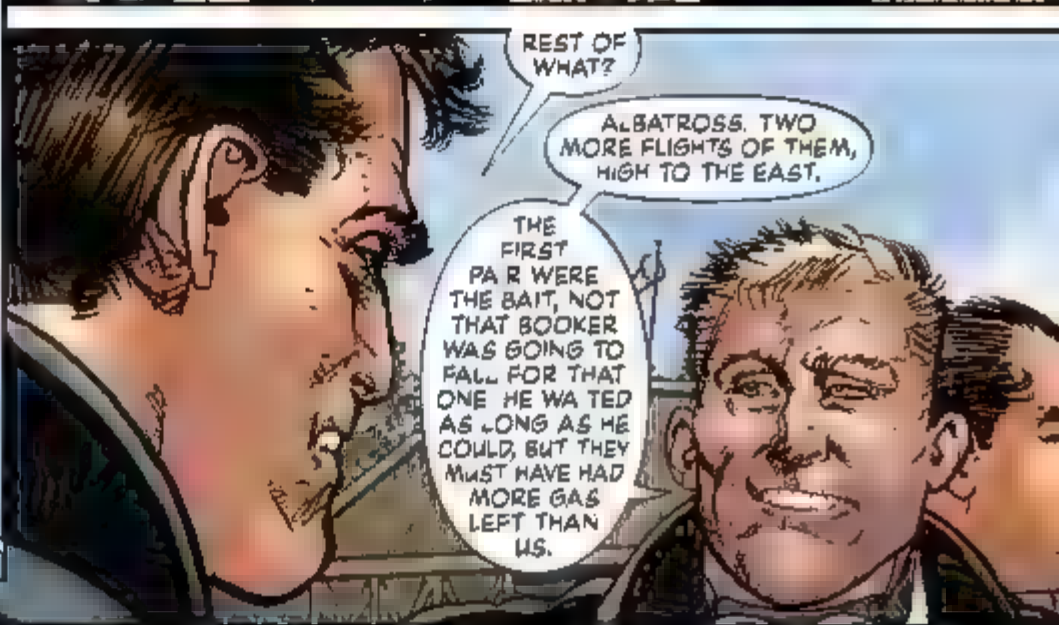
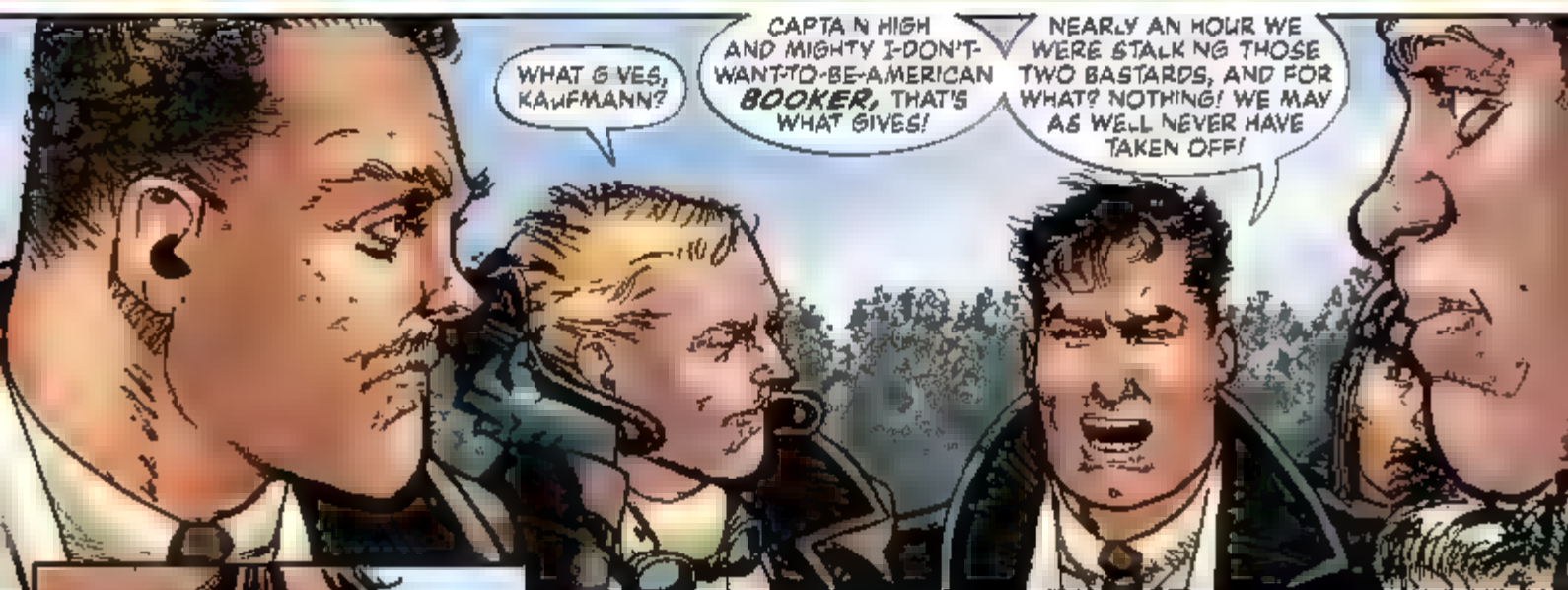


WHY DON'T WE
ATTACK...?



2: THE FACTS OF LIFE







A WORD, IF
YOU PLEASE

D.S.G. AGAIN,
ROX. MORE OF THEM
ALL THE TIME NOW, I'M
SORRY TO SAY.

ALL RIGHT,
JACK. STILL NO
REPLACEMENT FOR
CLARKIE, SO LEAVE
IT WITH ME WHEN
YOU'VE WRITTEN
IT ALL UP



WHAT,
WH.

OH, MANY
THINGS. OF SHOES
AND SHIPS AND SEALING
WAX, OF CABBAGES
AND KINGS.



AND WHY THE
SEA IS BOILING HOT, AND
WHETHER PIGS HAVE WINGS.
WORKING YOURSELF INTO
QUITE A LATHER UP THERE,
WEREN'T YOU?

ER.

'COURSE YOU
WERE. I COULD SEE YOU
WANDERING ALL OVER THE
PLACE, YOU WERE STAMPING
HELL OUT OF THE RUDDER
BAR WITHOUT EVEN
REALIZING IT.

I HEARD
ABOUT THE OTHER
ALBATROSS.

GOOD MAN,
SHAME YOU DIDN'T
SEE THEM AT THE TIME
THOUGH, ISN'T
IT?

YOU'VE GOTTEN
VERY KEEN AGAIN, I MUST
SAY. I THOUGHT YOU'D NEVER
FLY AGAIN AFTER THAT FIRST
LITTLE ENCOUNTER.

THAT
WAS, THAT WAS
JUST... DAMMIT...!

I CAN'T THINK
ABOUT THAT NOW.
THERE'S A WAR ON
AND I'VE GOT TO
PLAY MY PART,
THAT'S ALL THERE
IS TO IT.

I CAN'T...
FAIL...



THAT'S THE
SPIRIT, OLD CHAP.
BUT I ASSURE YOU,
YOU CAN.

AND YOU WILL, TOO,
UNLESS YOU START THINKING
A LOT HARDER ABOUT THE JOB
YOU'VE SIGNED UP FOR.

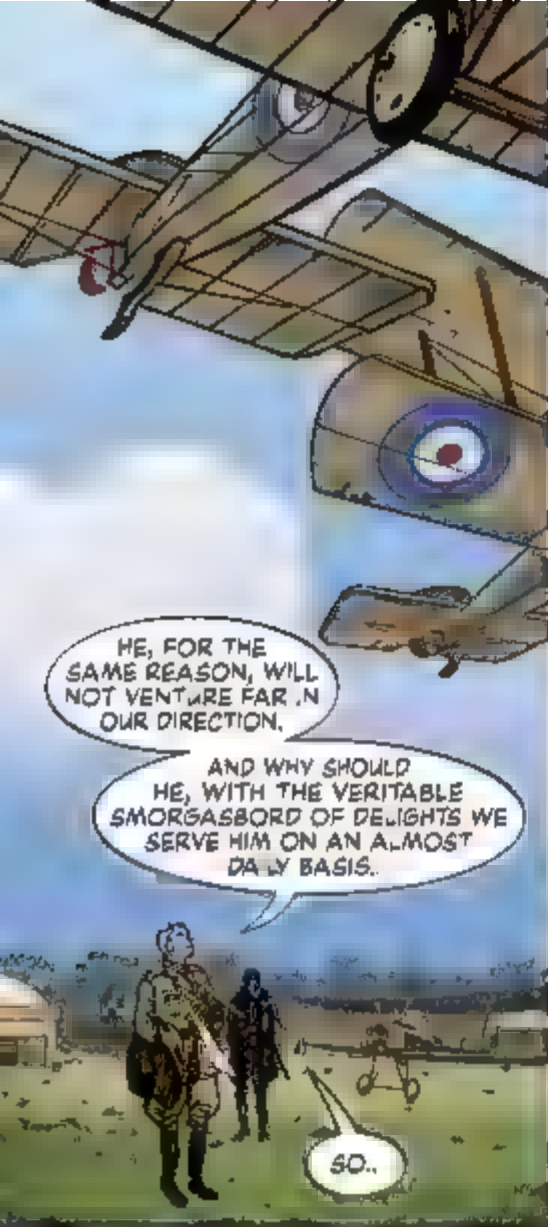
HOW
SO?

WE'RE UNDER
ORDERS TO FLY WHAT ARE
CALLED **DEEP OFFENSIVE
PATROLS**: DEEP, BECAUSE THEY
GO DEEP BEHIND ENEMY LINES,
OFFENSIVE, BECAUSE THEY OFFEND
MY INTELLIGENCE TO A QUITE
STUPENDOUS DEGREE.

BUT THAT'S THE
ENGLISH FOR YOU. THEIRS
NOT TO REASON WHY, THEIRS
BUT TO DO AND DIE, ET CETERA.
ANYWAY.

THE PREVAILING
WIND HEREBOUTS BLOWS
FROM THE WEST. THAT MEANS
IT'S IN OUR FACES WHEN WE'RE
GOING HOME. **THAT** MEANS IT'S
IN FRITZ'S INTEREST TO DRAW
US AS FAR OVER HIS LINES
AS POSSIBLE BEFORE HE
STARTS A SCRAP.

WE'RE LOW ON
FUEL AND AMMUNITION,
AND NOW WE'RE TRYING TO
FIGHT OUR WAY OUT AGAINST
THE WIND. ENTER THE AFORE-
MENTIONED FRITZ, BEING
PERFECTLY BEASTLY AND
NO DOUBT PISSING HIM-
SELF LAUGHING.



HE, FOR THE SAME REASON, WILL NOT VENTURE FAR IN OUR DIRECTION.

AND WHY SHOULD HE, WITH THE VERITABLE SMORGASBORD OF DELIGHTS WE SERVE HIM ON AN ALMOST DAILY BASIS.

SO..

SO: USE YOUR HEAD. USE YOUR EYES IN PARTICULAR. SEARCH EVERY LAST INCH OF SKY, CONSTANTLY AND CAREFULLY, WATCHING THE TAILS OF YOUR WINGMEN AND LEADER WHILE THEY IN TURN WATCH YOURS.

FIRST PRIZE IS SURVIVAL. SECOND YOU WON'T EVEN FEEL, IF YOU'RE LUCKY. THIRD IS A FLAMER, WHICH YOU MOST CERTAINLY WILL.

YEAH, I'VE HEARD ABOUT THAT WHAT DO YOU...?

SHOOT YOURSELF.

I DON'T HAVE A PISTOL.

GET ONE. IT'S A LONG WAY DOWN FROM FIFTEEN THOUSAND FEET, ESPECIALLY WHEN YOU'RE DOUSED IN BLAZING GASOLINE.



HUM. WELL.

THANKS FOR THE ADVICE, I GUESS.

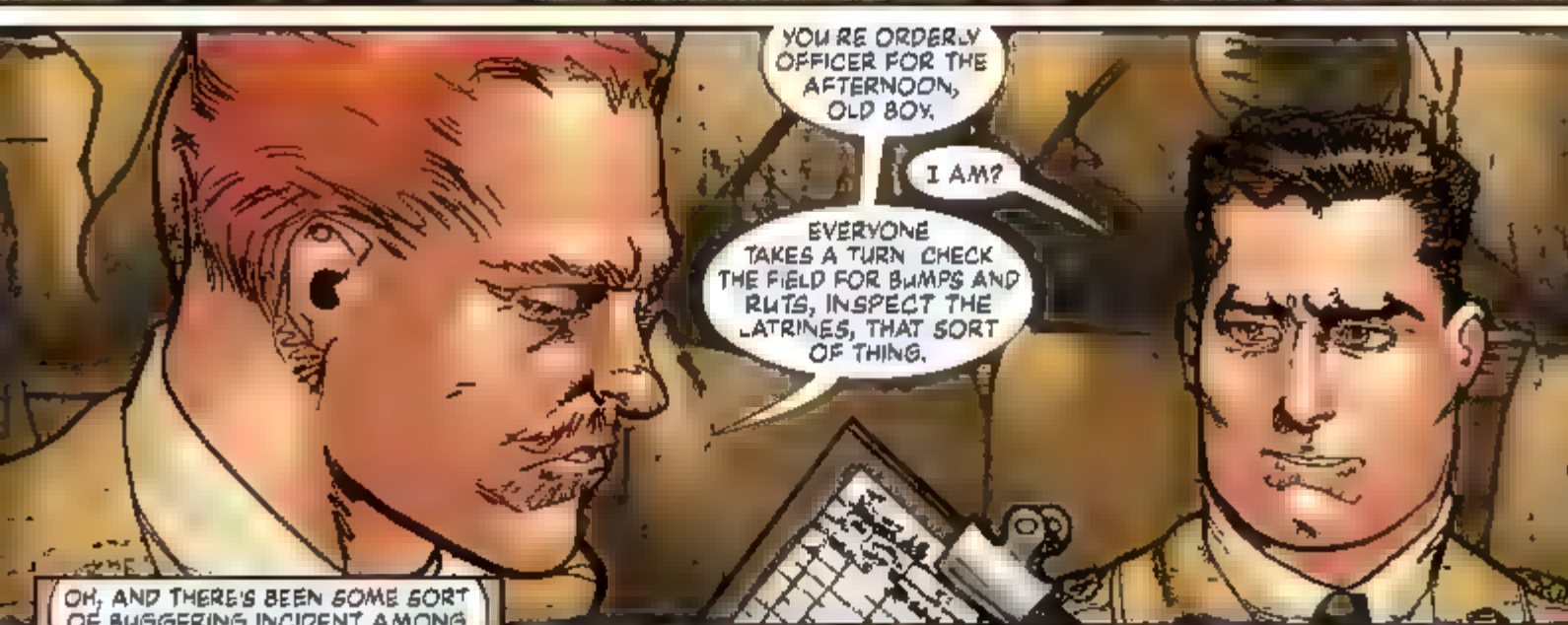
DON'T MENTION IT, I THINK I HEAR A PINK GIN CALLING MY NAME.

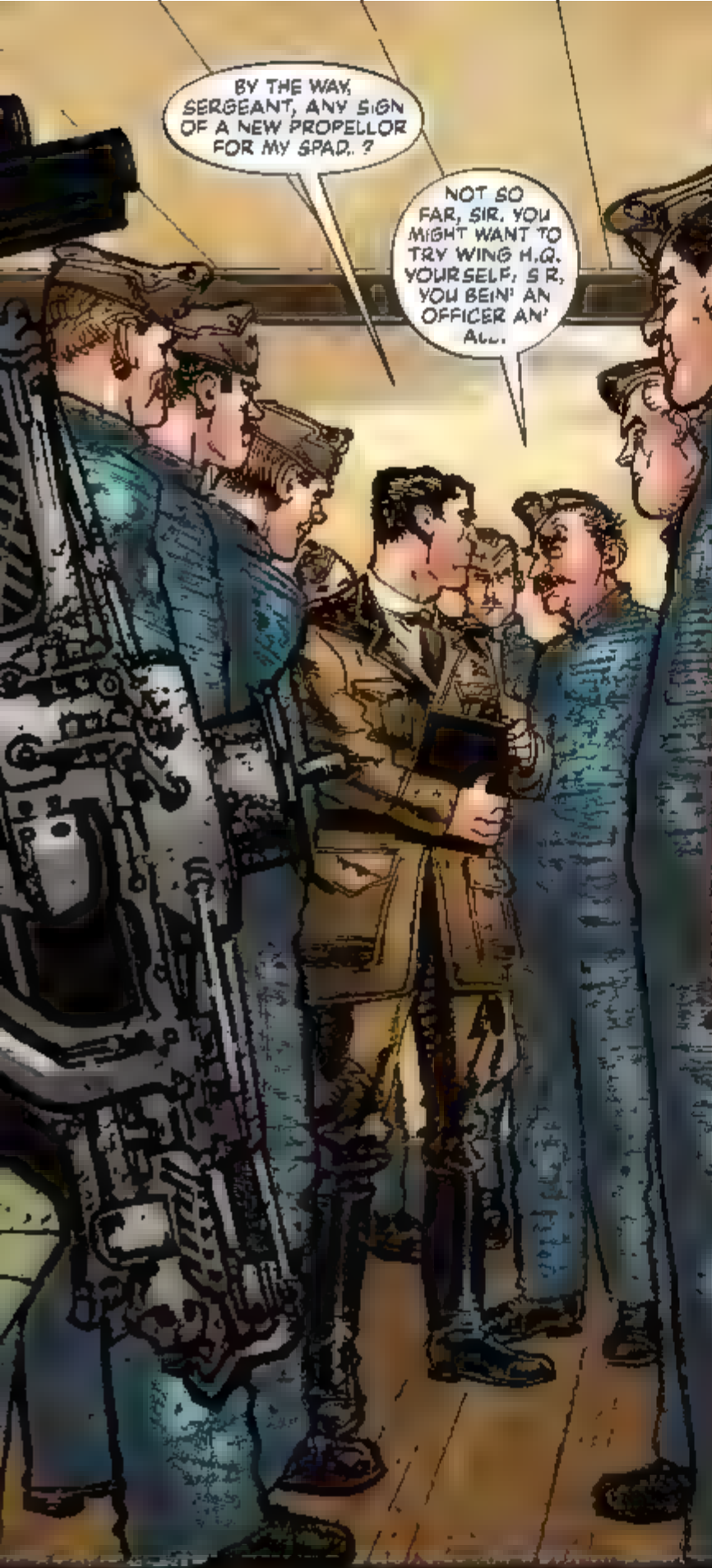
SAY, CAPTAIN BOOKER? IF YOU THINK THE ENGLISH ARE SO DUMB, WHY D'YOU WANT TO BE WITH THEM SO MUCH?

I MEAN... WHY DO YOU WANT TO GIVE UP BEING AMERICAN?

OH, LARGELY BECAUSE OF PEOPLE LIKE YOU.







BY THE WAY, SERGEANT, ANY SIGN OF A NEW PROPELLOR FOR MY SPAD. ?

NOT SO FAR, SIR. YOU MIGHT WANT TO TRY WING H.Q. YOURSELF, S R. YOU BEIN' AN OFFICER AN' ALL.



ME?

WELL, HOW IT IS, SIR, A REQUEST FOR A SPAD PROP FROM A PUP SQUADRON'S BOUND TO RA SE A FEW EYEBROWS AT WING. BUT IF YOU WERE TO TELEPHONE THEM YOURSELF, SIR, YOU MIGHT BE ABLE TO CUT THROUGH SOME O' THE RED TAPE.

UH...NO. NO, I WON'T BE, AH, I WON'T, I DON'T WANT TO TELEPHONE WING.



RIGHT, THEN.

WE. WE ALL KNOW WHY WE'RE HERE, AND I THINK... I WOULD BE BEST FOR EVERYONE IF, IF THE GUILTY PARTIES WERE TO JUST COME F--



JUST STEP FORWARD RIGHT AWAY. OKAY?

ANYONE?



YOU REALLY ARE A THOROUGHGOING BASTARD, AREN'T YOU, FRANKO?

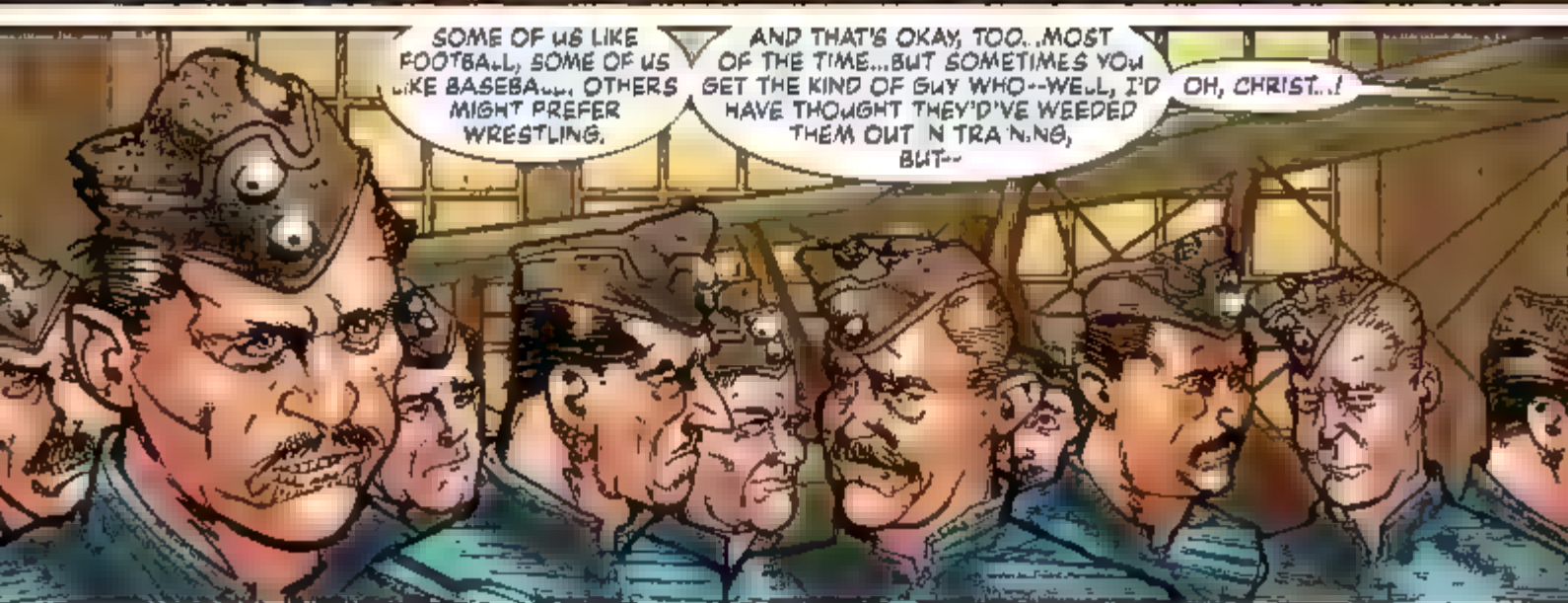
I PREFER TO THINK OF MYSELF AS AN UNMITIGATED SWINE.

I'D GIVE ANYTHING TO HEAR WHAT HE'S TELLING THEM ..



THE FACT IS, WE'RE ALL MEN HERE. MEN TOGETHER. AND--

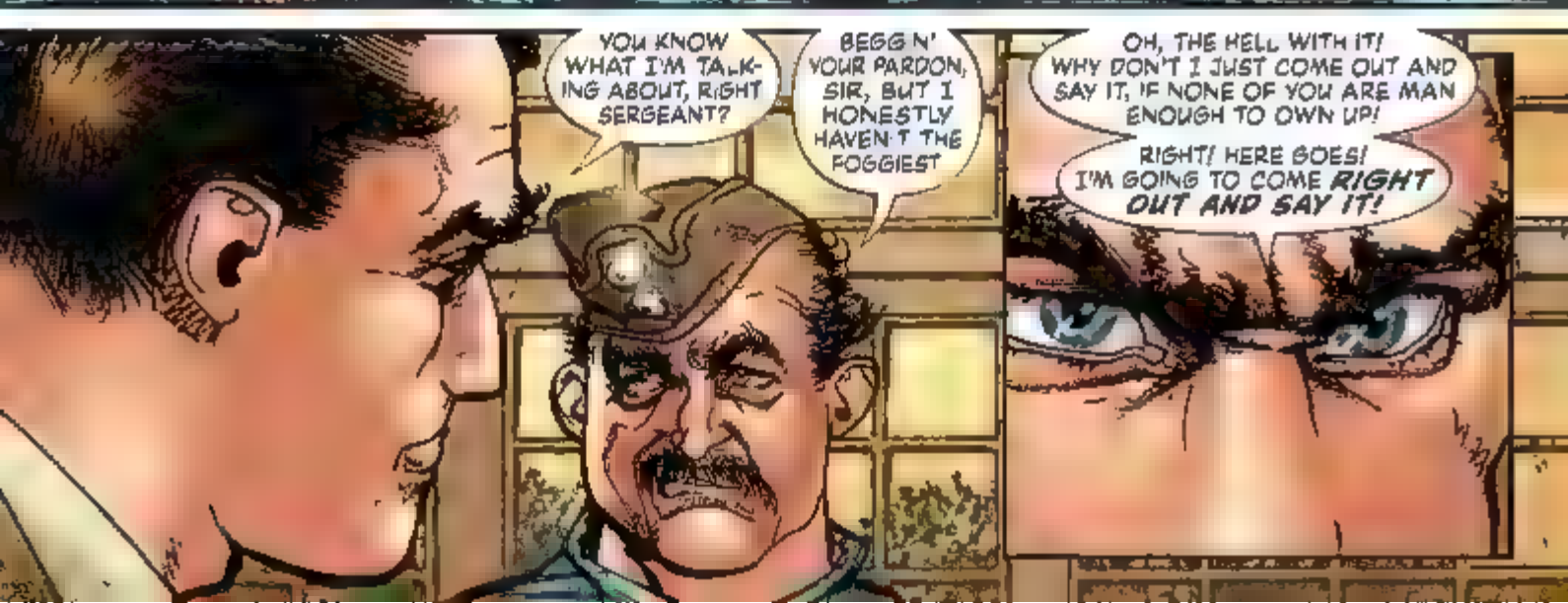
WELL, THAT'S USUALLY A GOOD THING, THAT'S USUALLY JUST FINE. YOU GET GUYS WHO LIKE SPORTS, GUYS WHO ENJOY A GAME OR TWO. OKAY.



SOME OF US LIKE FOOTBALL, SOME OF US LIKE BASEBALL, OTHERS MIGHT PREFER WRESTLING.

AND THAT'S OKAY, TOO..MOST OF THE TIME...BUT SOMETIMES YOU GET THE KIND OF GUY WHO--WELL, I'D HAVE THOUGHT THEY'D'VE WEEDED THEM OUT N TRAINING, BUT--

OH, CHRIST..!

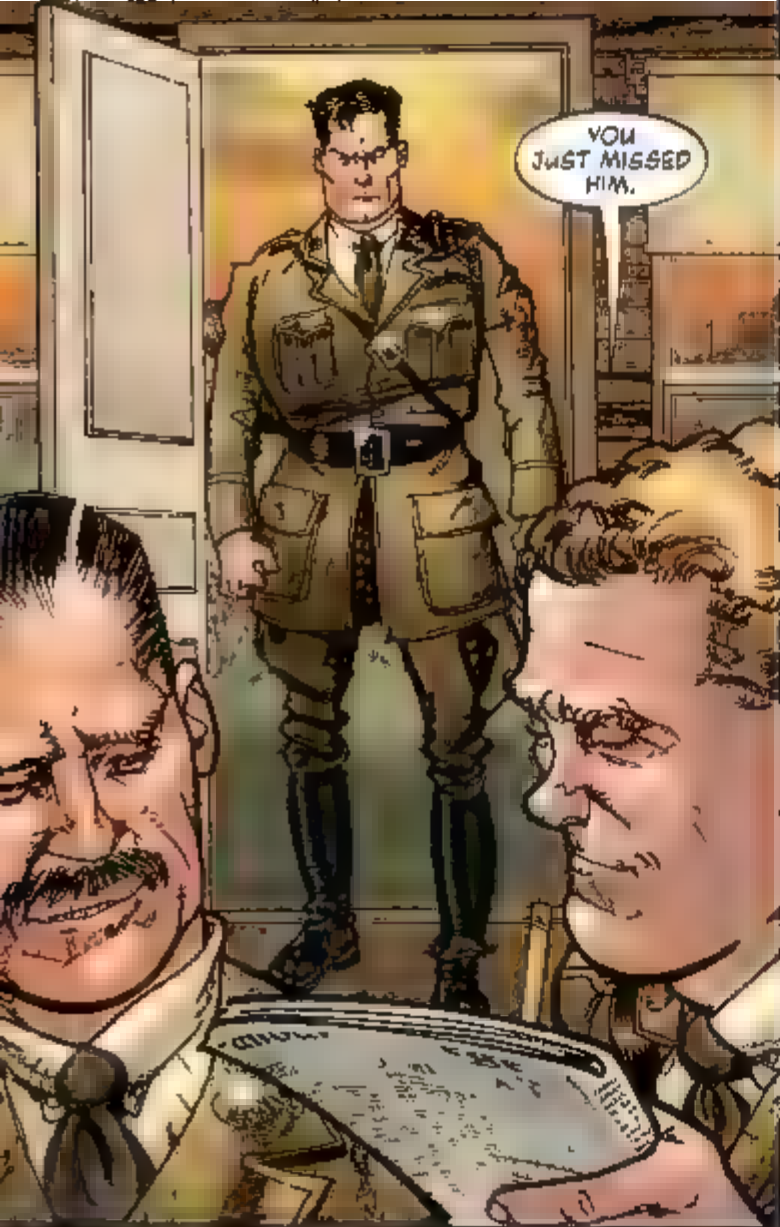


YOU KNOW WHAT I'M TALKING ABOUT, RIGHT SERGEANT?

BEGG N' YOUR PARDON, SIR, BUT I HONESTLY HAVEN'T THE FOGGIEST

OH, THE HELL WITH IT! WHY DON'T I JUST COME OUT AND SAY IT, IF NONE OF YOU ARE MAN ENOUGH TO OWN UP!

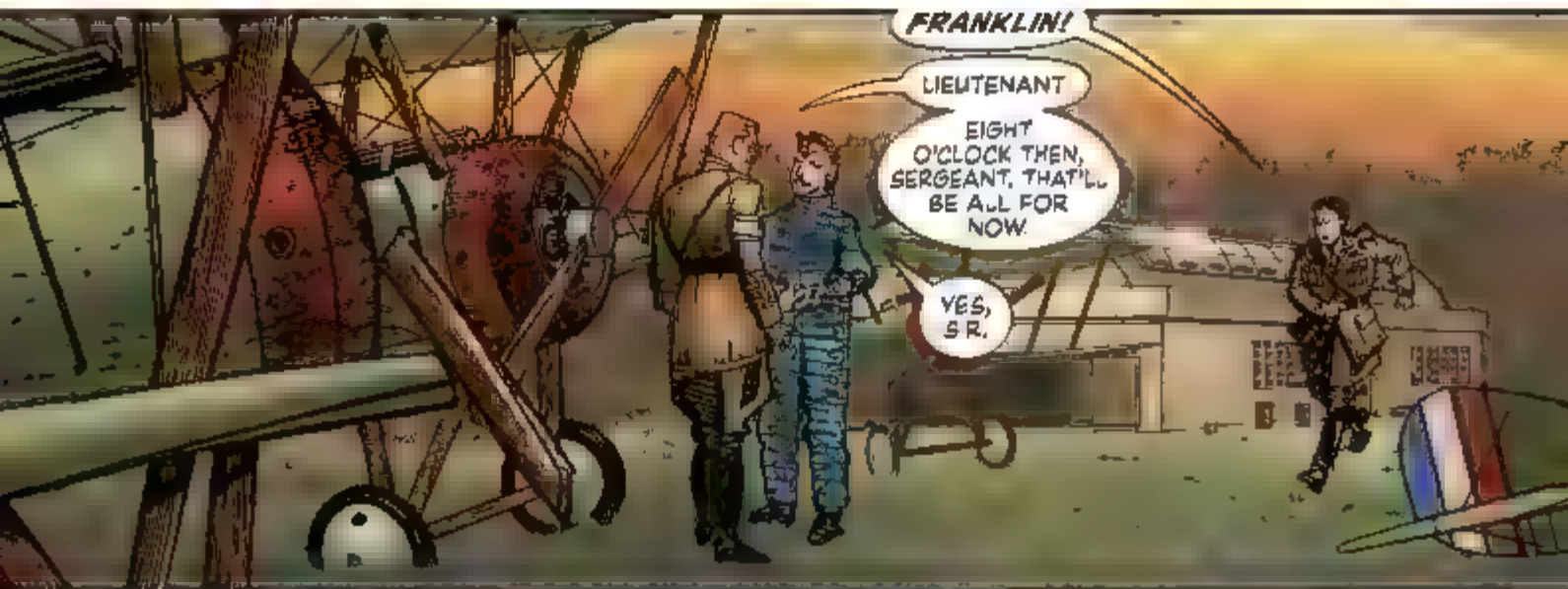
RIGHT! HERE GOES! I'M GOING TO COME RIGHT OUT AND SAY IT!



YOU
JUST MISSED
HIM.



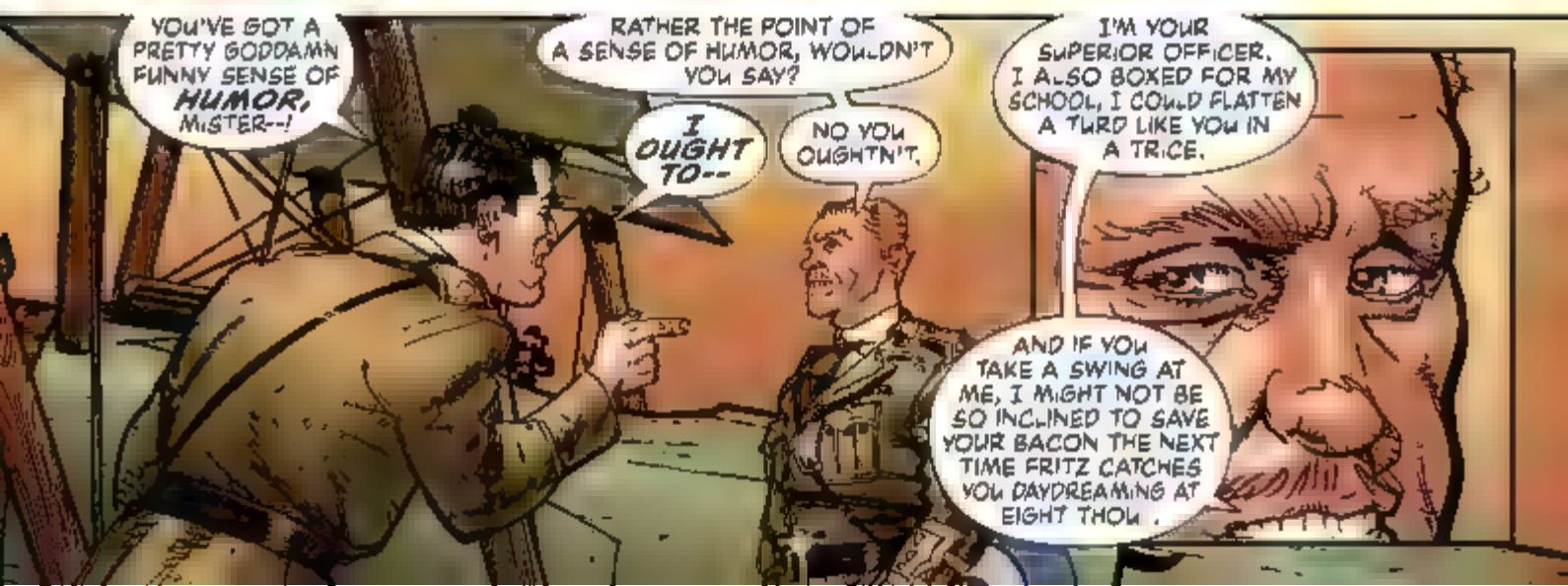
HA HA
HA HA HA
HA HA HA
HA HA



FRANKLIN!

LIEUTENANT
EIGHT
O'CLOCK THEN,
SERGEANT, THAT'LL
BE ALL FOR
NOW.

YES,
SR.



YOU'VE GOT A
PRETTY GODDAMN
FUNNY SENSE OF
HUMOR,
MISTER--!

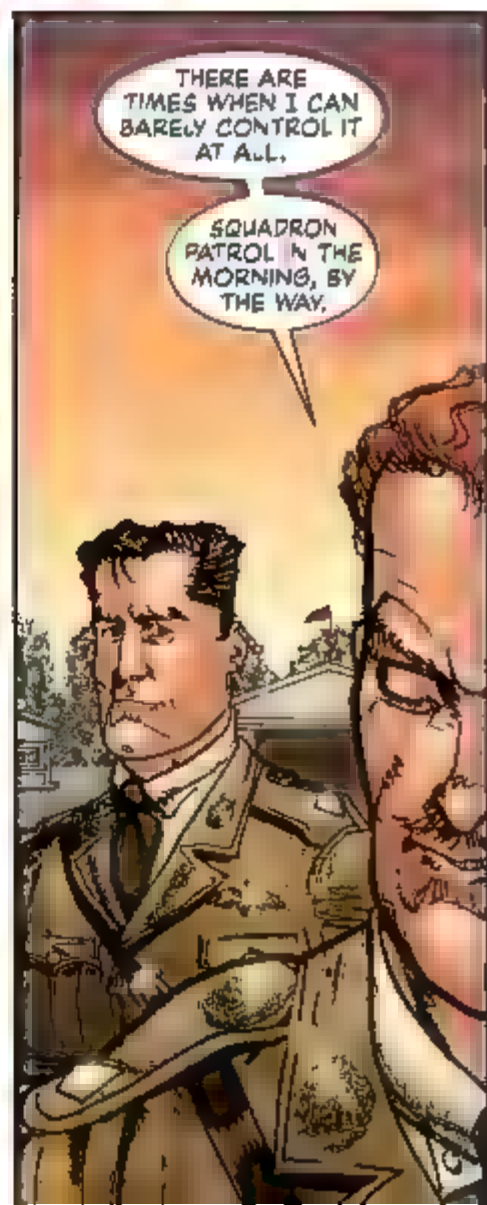
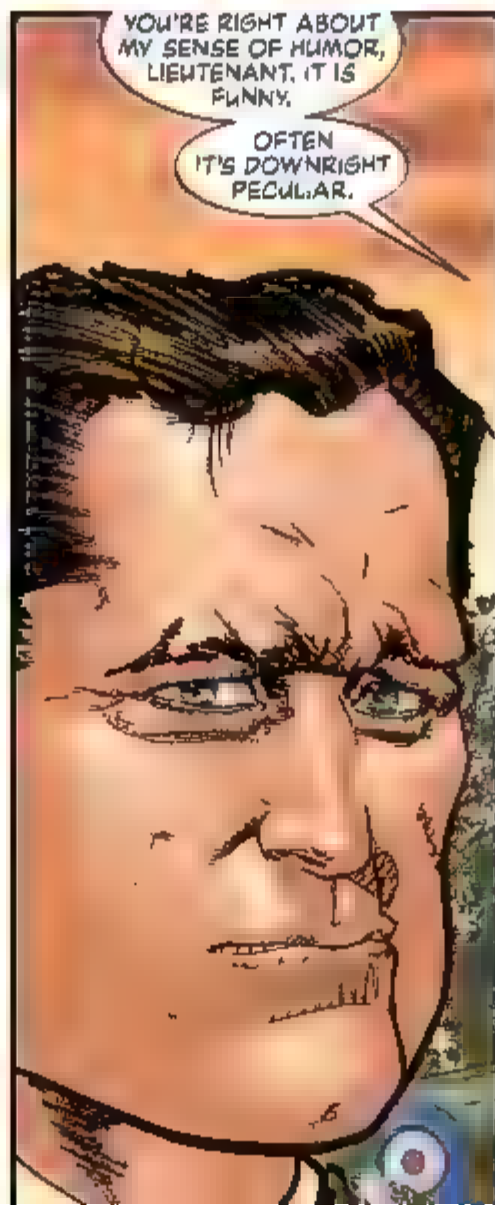
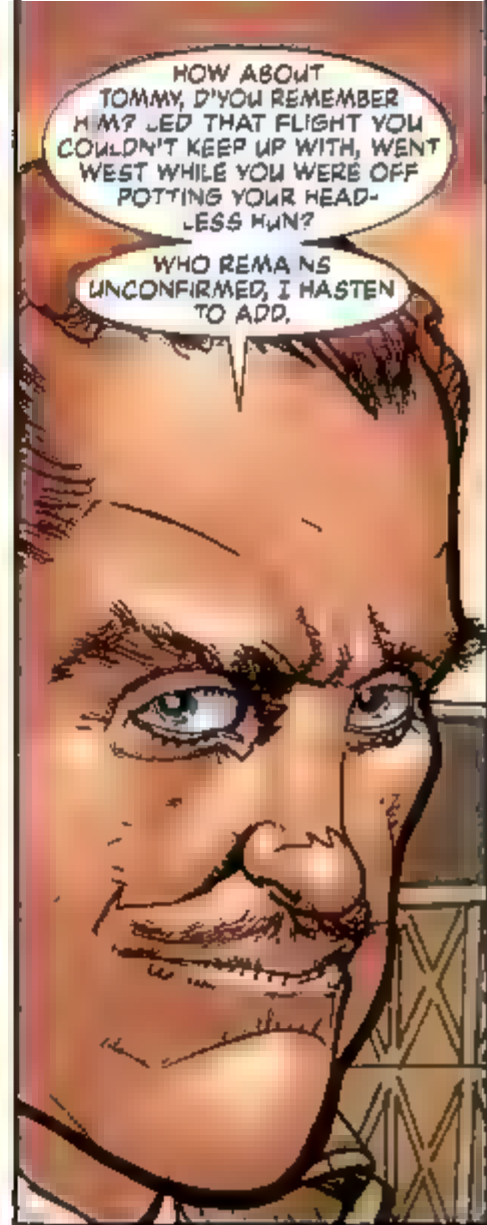
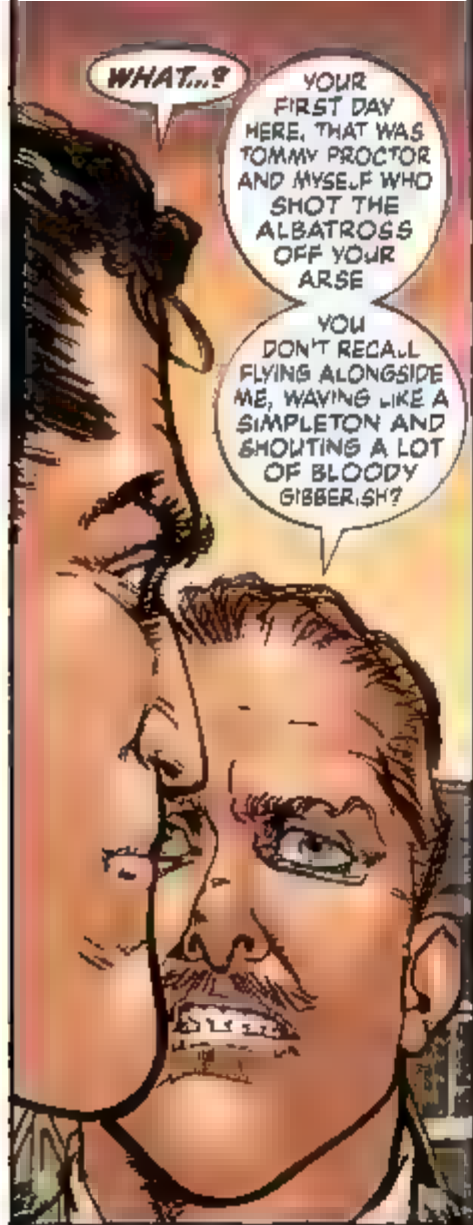
RATHER THE POINT OF
A SENSE OF HUMOR, WOULDN'T
YOU SAY?

I
OUGHT
TO--

NO YOU
OUGHTN'T.

I'M YOUR
SUPERIOR OFFICER.
I ALSO BOXED FOR MY
SCHOOL, I COULD FLATTEN
A TURD LIKE YOU IN
A TRICE.

AND IF YOU
TAKE A SWING AT
ME, I MIGHT NOT BE
SO INCLINED TO SAVE
YOUR BACON THE NEXT
TIME FRITZ CATCHES
YOU DAYDREAMING AT
EIGHT THOU.



"NOW THAT WE'RE
BACK UP TO STRENGTH,
MAJOR ROXBURGH-
JONES WANTS TO TRY
BEATING FRITZ AT
HIS OWN GAME



"CAPTAIN FRANKEN WILL LEAD C-FLIGHT
AT FIFTEEN THOU. THE REST, LED BY THE
C.O. AND MYSELF, WILL PATROL THREE
THOUSAND FEET ABOVE THEM. AT THAT
ALTITUDE THE PUP HAS THE EDGE OVER
THE ALBATROSS--OR SO RUNS THE
POPULAR THEORY.

"WE BOUNCE ANYONE
WHO TRIES TO BOUNCE
FRANKO, IS THE PLAN
IN A NUTSHELL.

"KEEP YOUR EYES
OPEN AND YOUR
HEADS TURNING.
WATCH FOR MY
SIGNALS.

"OFF WE
GO."

JEEEEESSSS
CHRRRIISST--!

C-C-COME ON,
YOU B-B-BASTARDS,
B-B-B-BEFORE I
F-F-F--

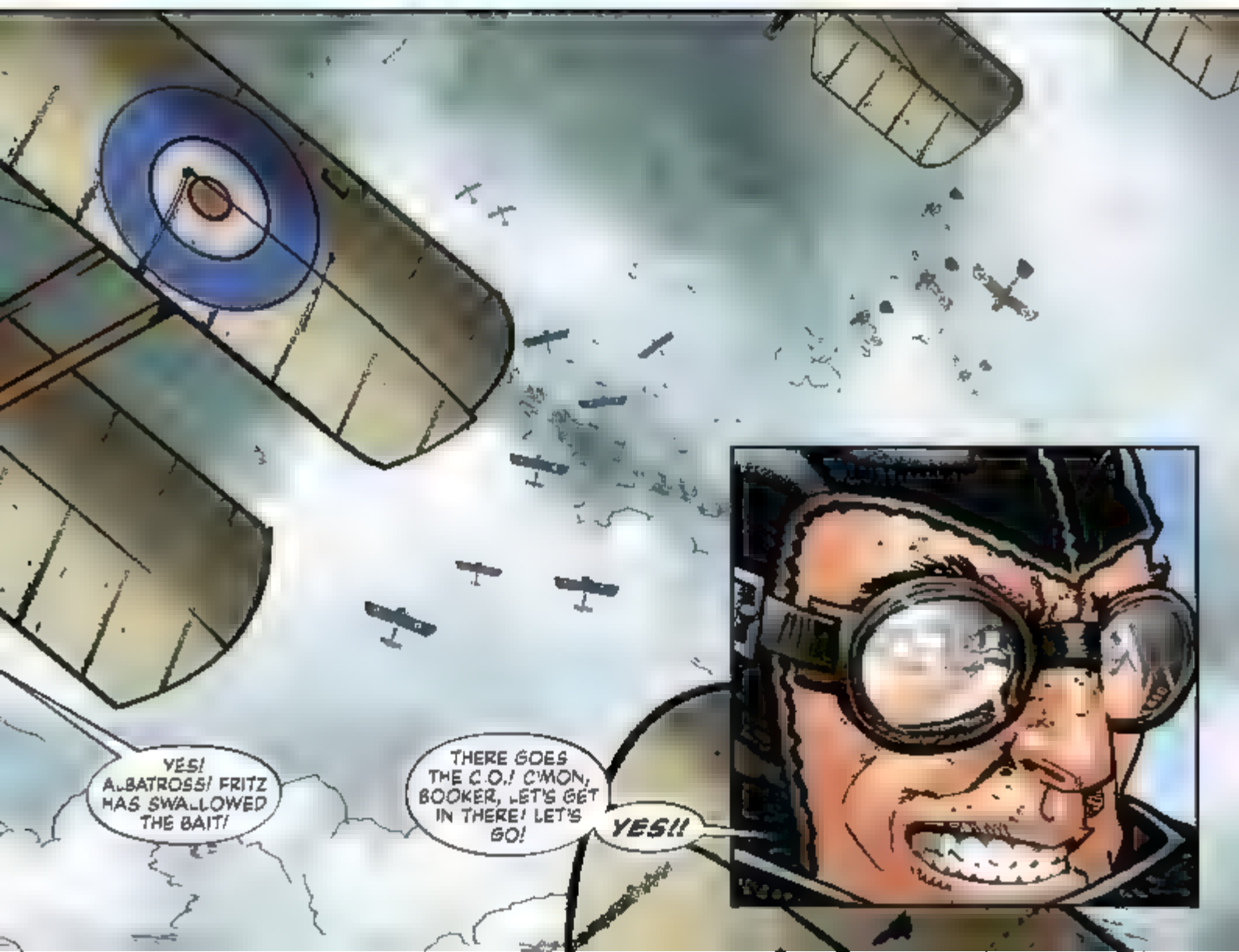
UH?





RUMPLERS!

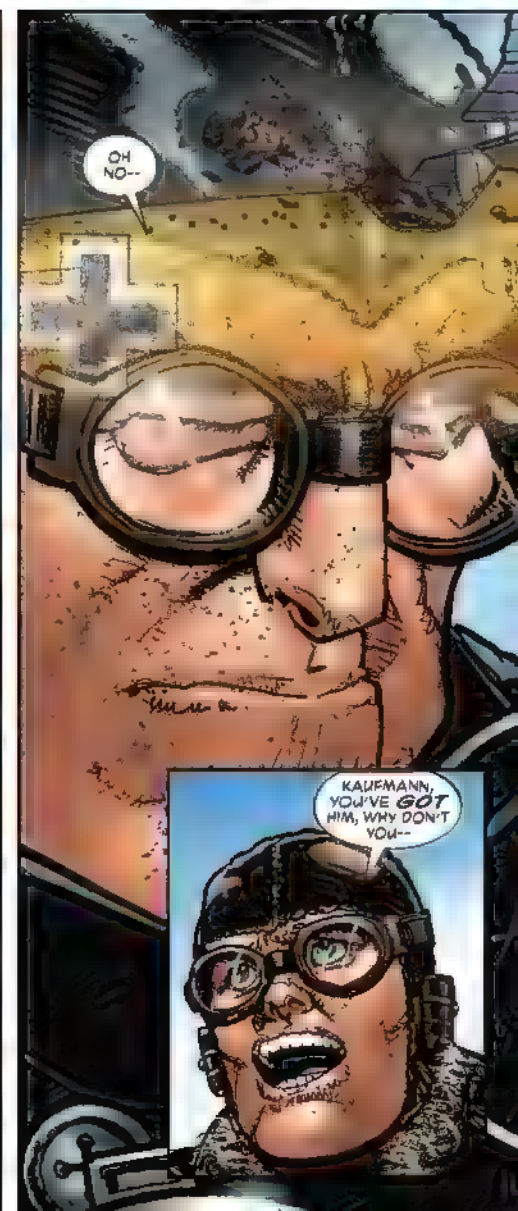
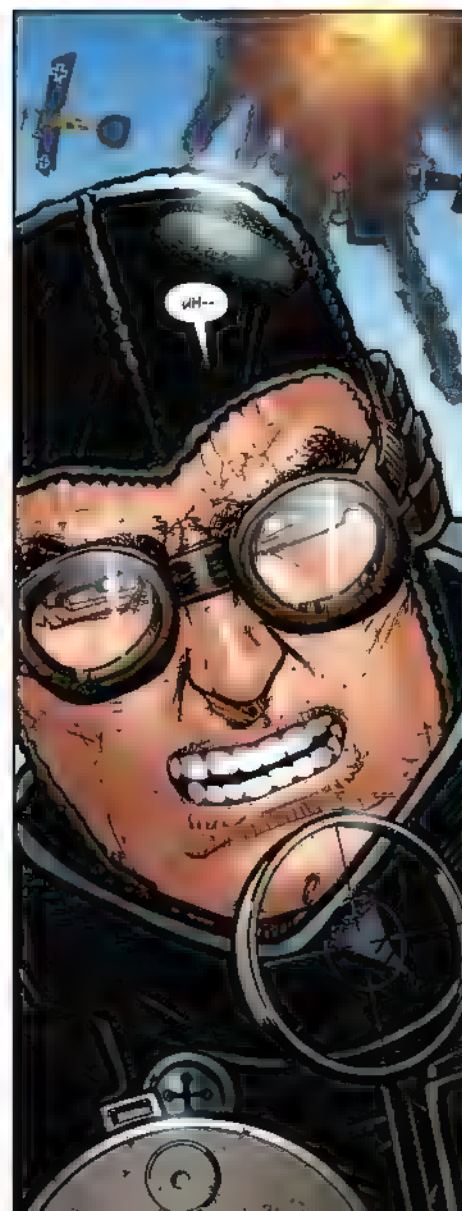
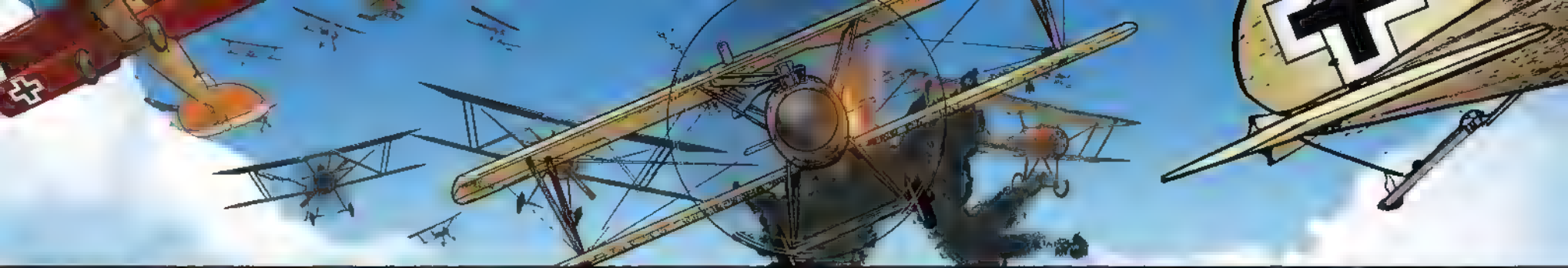
FRANKLIN'S
GOING FOR
THEM--

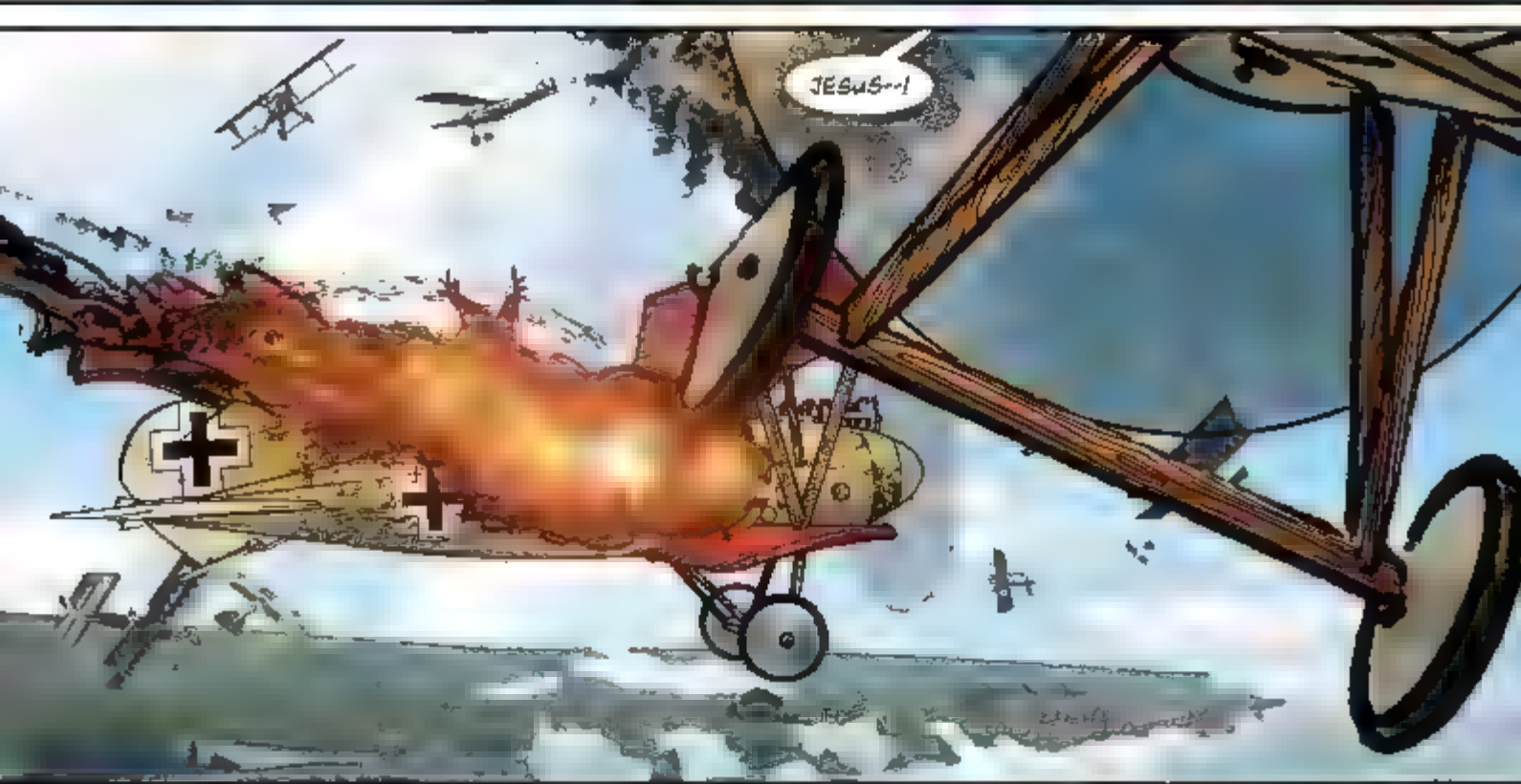
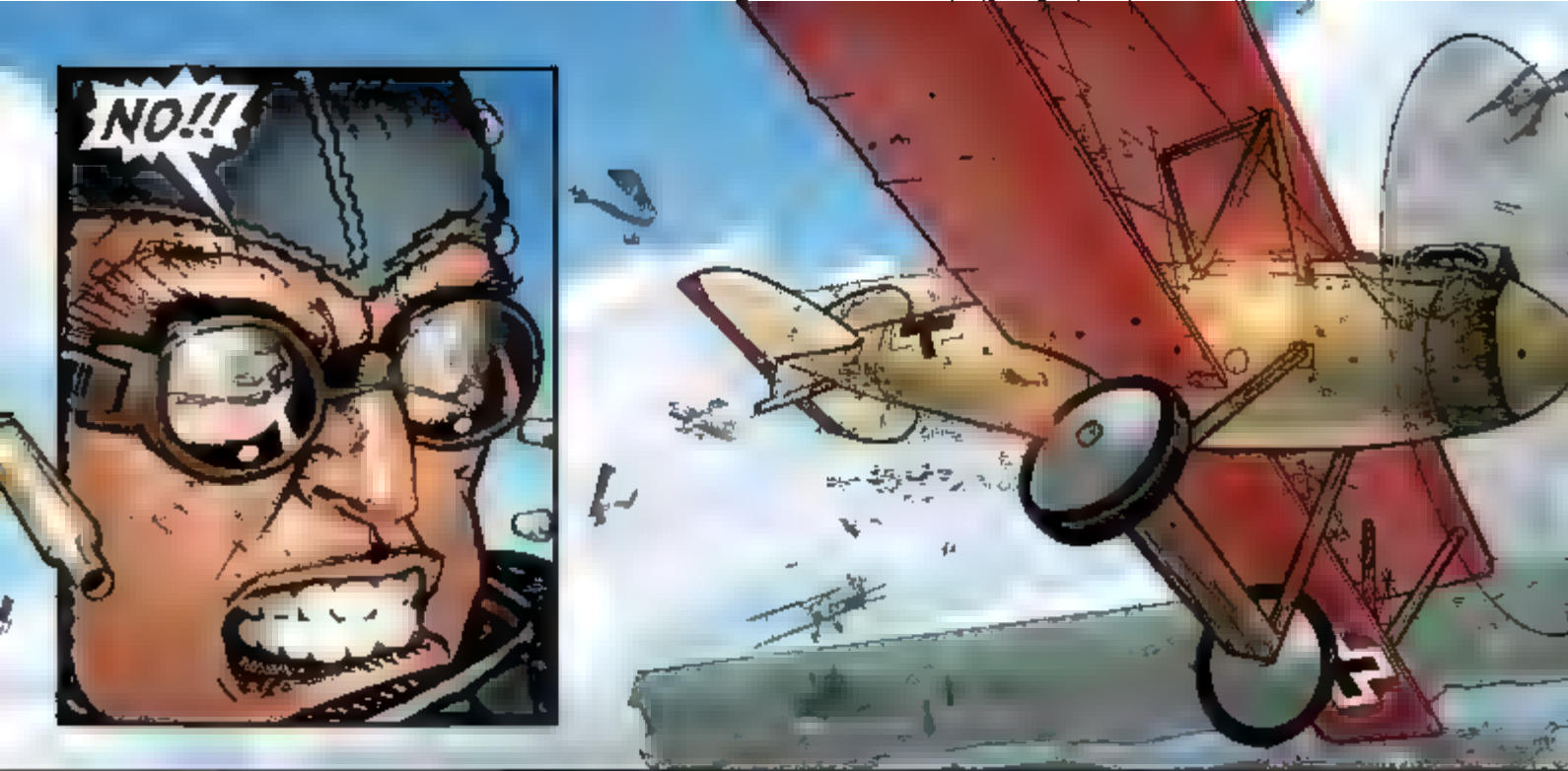


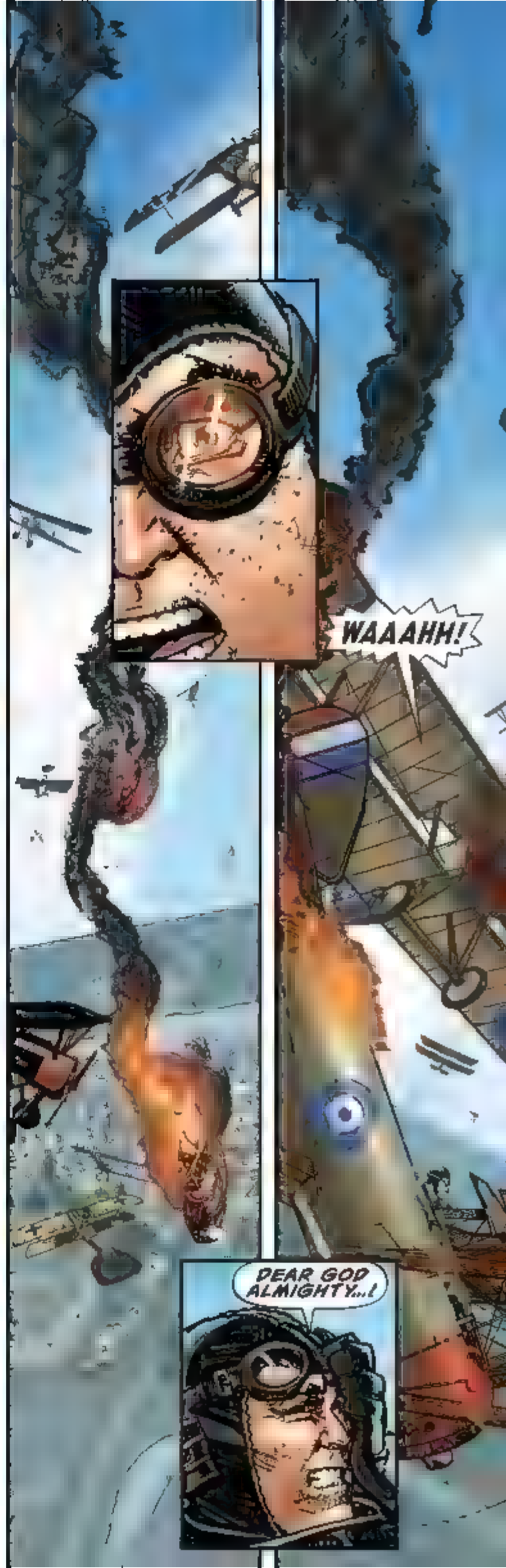
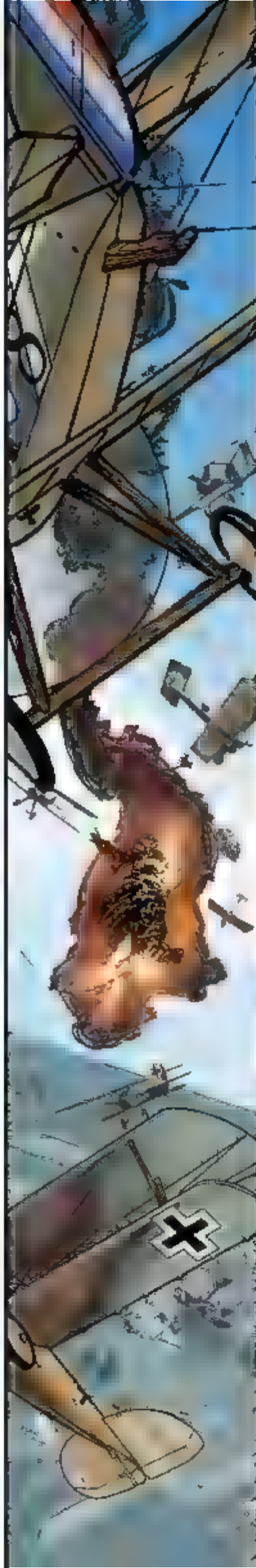
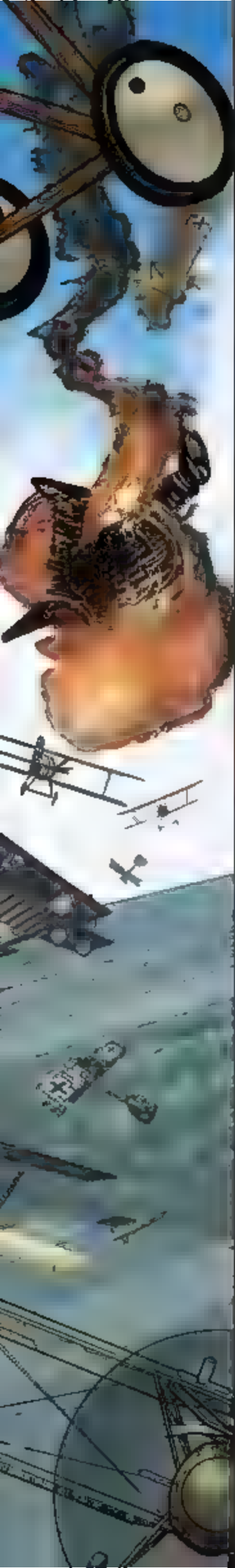
YES!
ALBATROSS! FRITZ
HAS SWALLOWED
THE BAIT!

THERE GOES
THE C.O.! C'MON,
BOOKER, LET'S GET
IN THERE! LET'S
GO!

YES!!



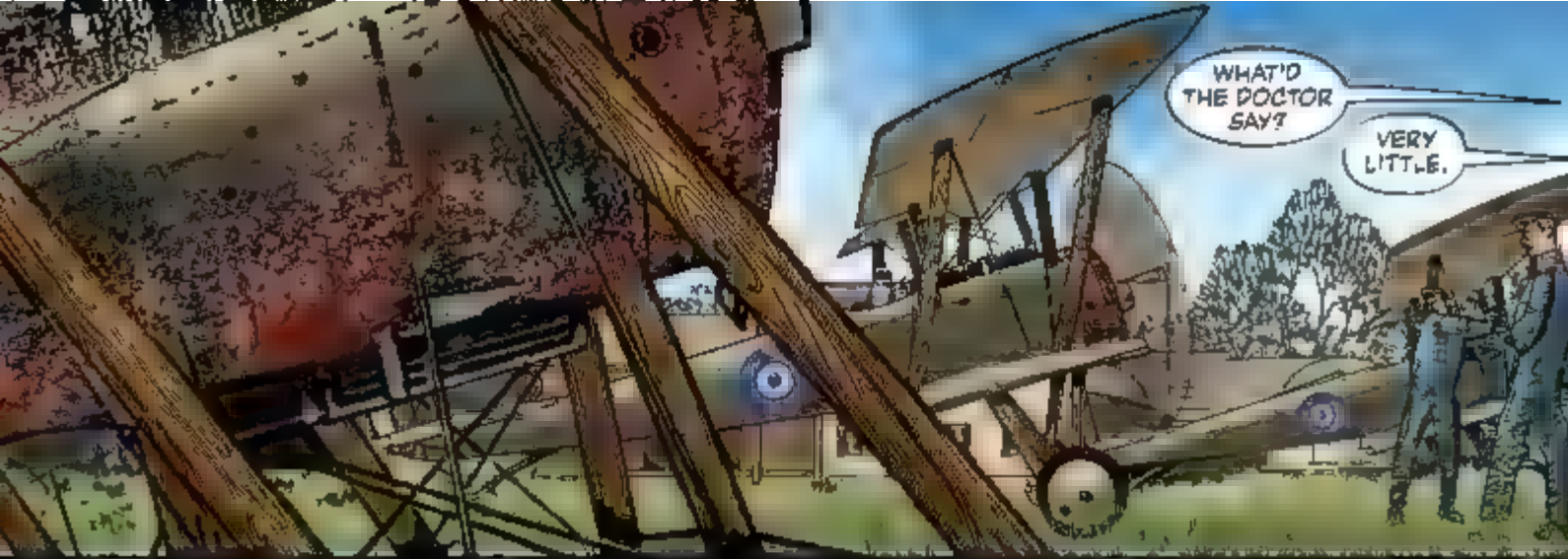




WAAHH!



DEAR GOD
ALMIGHTY...!



WHAT'D
THE DOCTOR
SAY?

VERY
LITTLE.



AH, MILLIGAN TOO, I'M AFRAID.
ALL THE SAME, NOT BAD IN
EXCHANGE FOR HALF A
DOZEN ALBATR.

CHR ST, MY
EARS...WHAT ABOUT
YOUR NEW CHUM, HOW
DID HE GET ON?



YES, THANKS AGAIN FOR
THAT, ROX, HE'S JUST WHAT
B-FLIGHT NEEDED. YOUR
GENEROSITY KNOWS NO
BOUNDS.

BUT IN ALL
SERIOUSNESS, HE'S
A SURPRISINGLY GOOD
PILOT, AND HE REALLY IS
ONE HELL OF A SHOT. IT'S...
THE **REALITY** OF WHAT
WE DO THAT KEEPS
BRINGING HIM UP
SHORT.



HE MIGHT ACTUALLY DO
QUITE WELL, STRANGE AS IT
SOUNDS. IF HE DOESN'T CRACK
UP COMPLETELY FIRST.

WELL, HE KEEPS
COMING BACK FOR MORE,
DOESN'T HE?

STILL, THERE'S
SOMETHING A TRIFLE
RUM ABOUT OUR MISTER
KAUFMANN. YOU ASK HIM THE
MOST INNOCUOUS QUESTION
ABOUT HIS ORIGINS, AND HE
GETS A LOOK ON HIS FACE
LIKE YOU'VE COME TO
ARREST HIM FOR
BIGAMY.

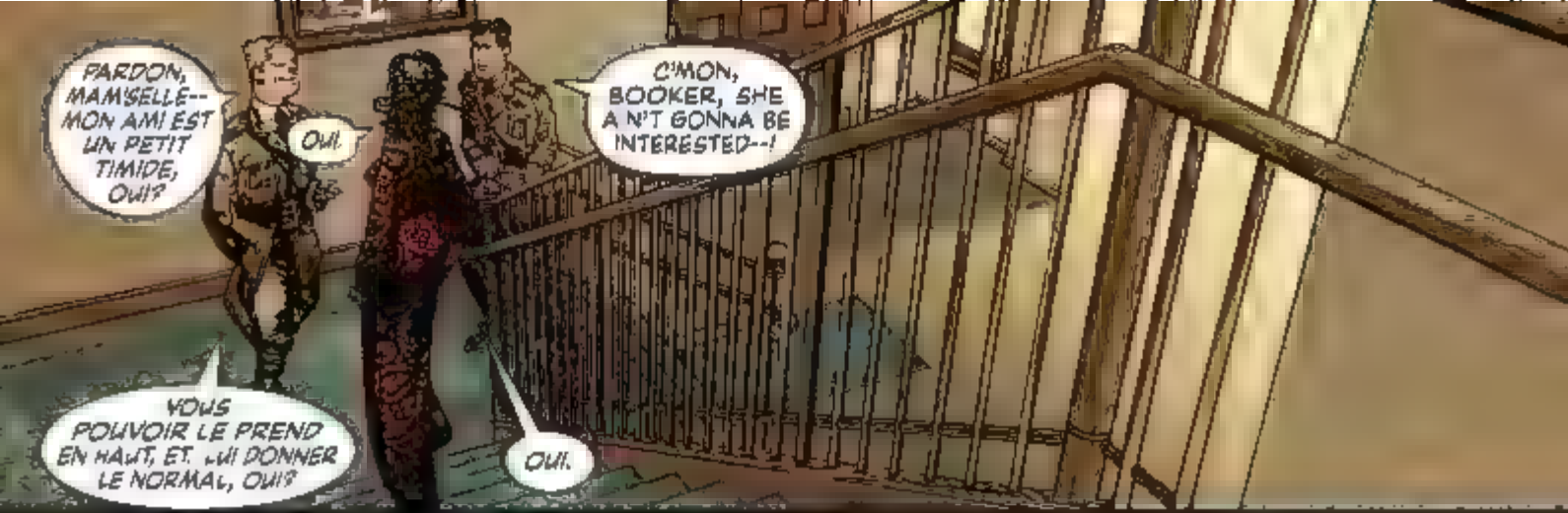


ANYWAY A
GOOD DAY. WE
OUGHT TO SPOIL
THE CHAPS A
LITTLE.

SQUADRON
THRASH?

NIGHT ON
THE TOWN.





PARDON, MAM'ELLE--
MON AMI EST
UN PETIT
TIMIDE,
OUI?

OUI.

C'MON,
BOOKER, SHE
A N'T GONNA BE
INTERESTED--!

VOUS
POUVOIR LE PREND
EN HAUT, ET LUI DONNER
LE NORMAL, OUI?

OUI.



MAMAM, I AIN'T
BEEN IN YOUR COUNTRY
TOO LONG, SO I DON'T REALLY
UNDERSTAND YOUR CUSTOMS. I
DON'T SPEAK THE L'NGO, I SURE
DON'T KNOW HOW A FELLA
GOES ABOUT COURTING A
FRENCH LADY.

AND I GOTTA
TELL YOU, WHAT I DO S
REAL DANGEROUS...A
GIRL WANTS TO BE WITH A GUY
LIKE ME, SHE'S--GOTTA BE
READY FOR BAD NEWS
ALL THE TIME,
UNDERSTAND?

AND I THINK I
MIGHT'VE HAD A LITTLE
TOO MUCH TO--

UH?

HNNHH!!



GLORY--
GLORY--HALLE-
LUJAH--!

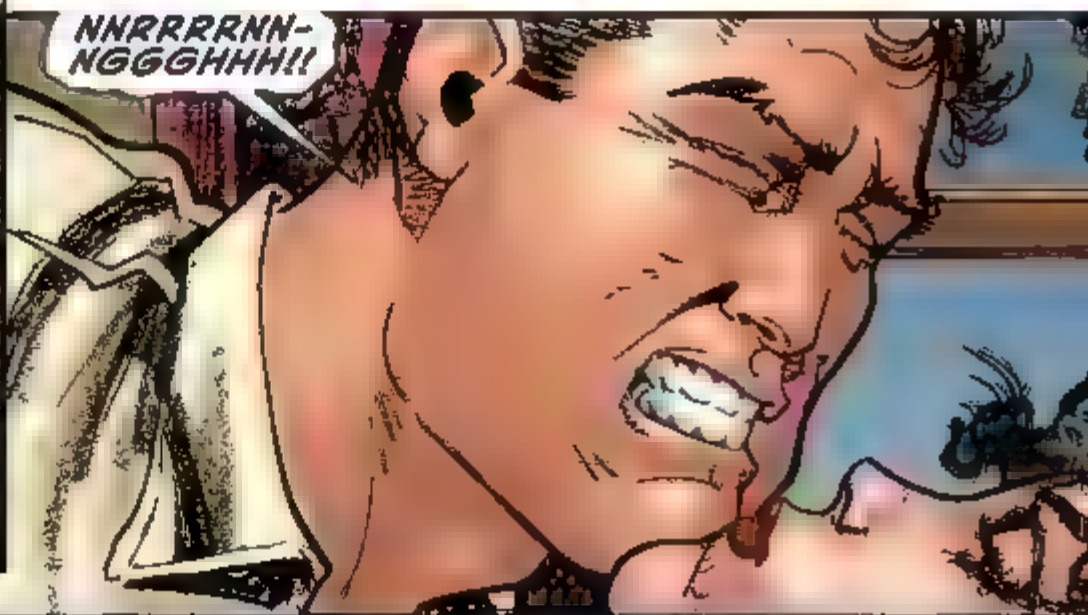
GLORY--
GLORY--HALLE-
LUJAH--!

OH
GOD!!



GLORY--
GLORY--

GLORY-
GLORYGLORY-
GLORY--



NNRRRRNN-
NGGGHHH!!



I... DON'T
EVEN KNOW YOUR
NAME..

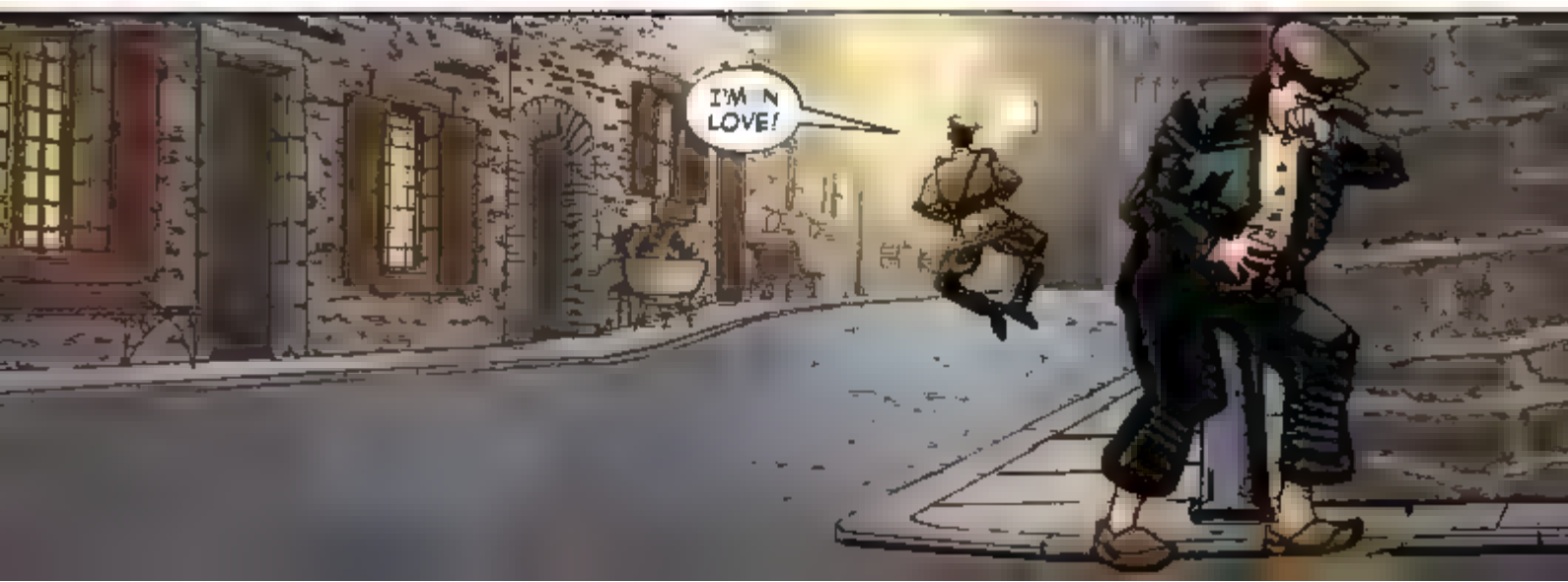
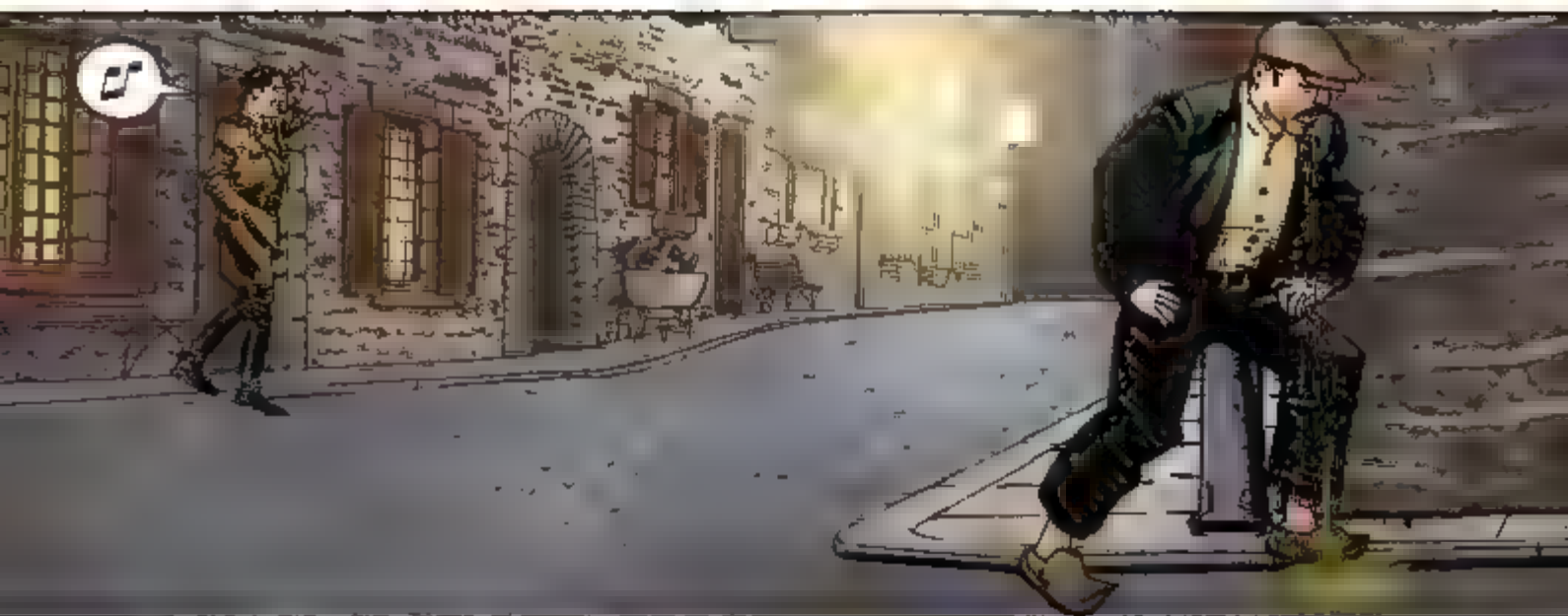
L'ARGENT.



THAT'S.

SUCH
A BEAUTIFUL
NAME..

VINGT-CINQ
FRANCS.

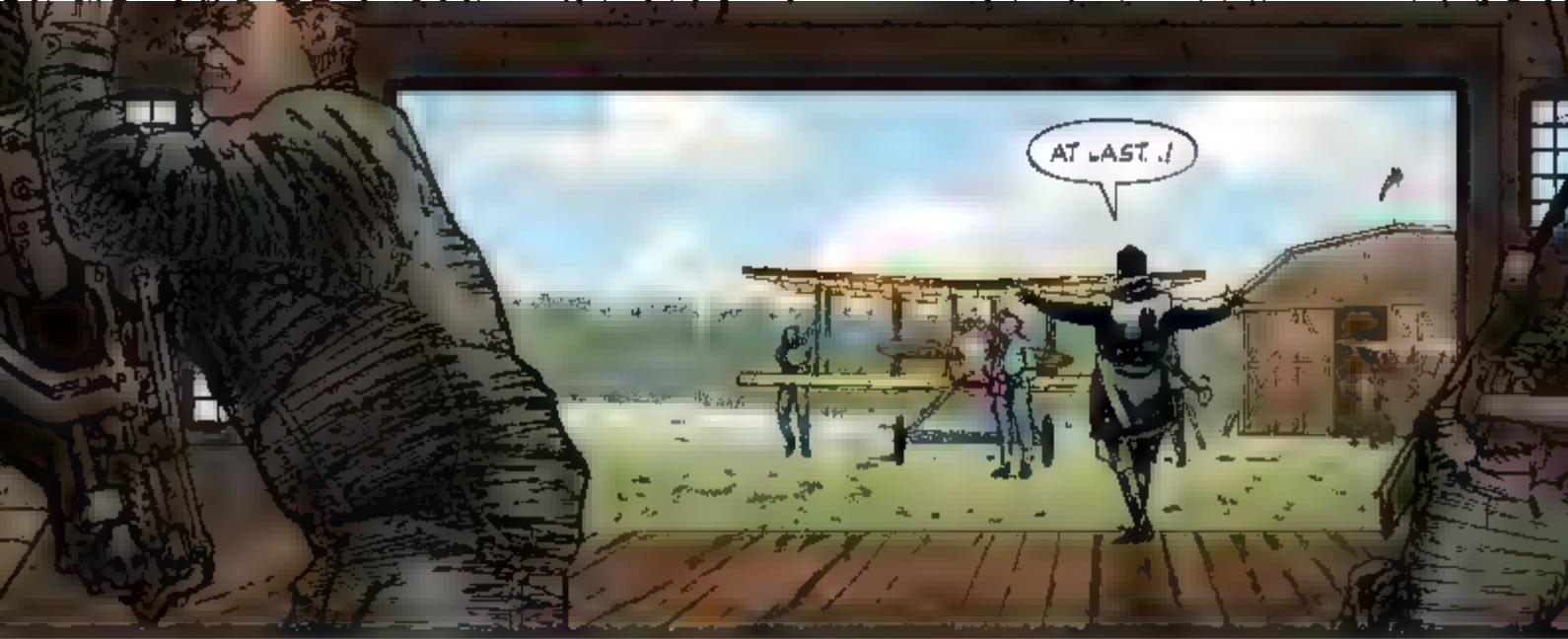


We Haven't Got a Hope in the Morn
When you soar in the air on a Spow
And you're scrapping with a Hun a
Well, you stuff down your nose 'til
Cos you haven't got a hope in the m

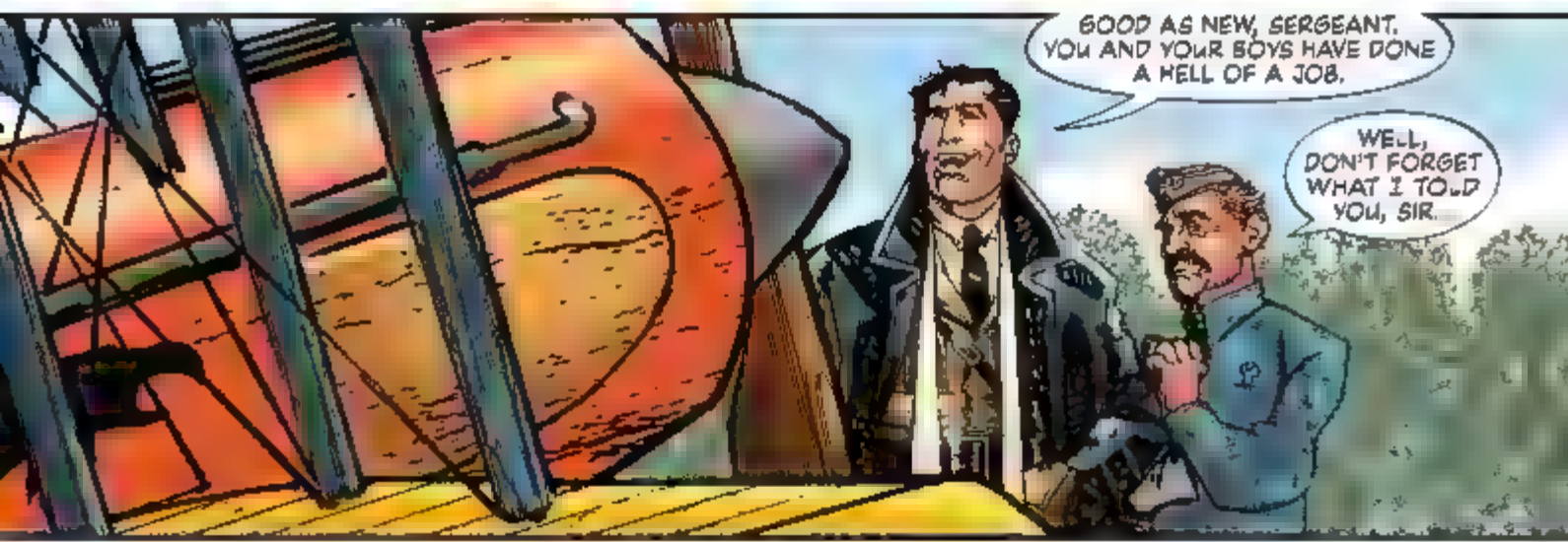
For a barman woke me from my be
I had a thick night and a very sore
And I said to myself to myself I sa
Oh! We haven't got a hope in the m

We were
Hadn't a
So we sho
Cos they l
-Two
an FE t
in the m



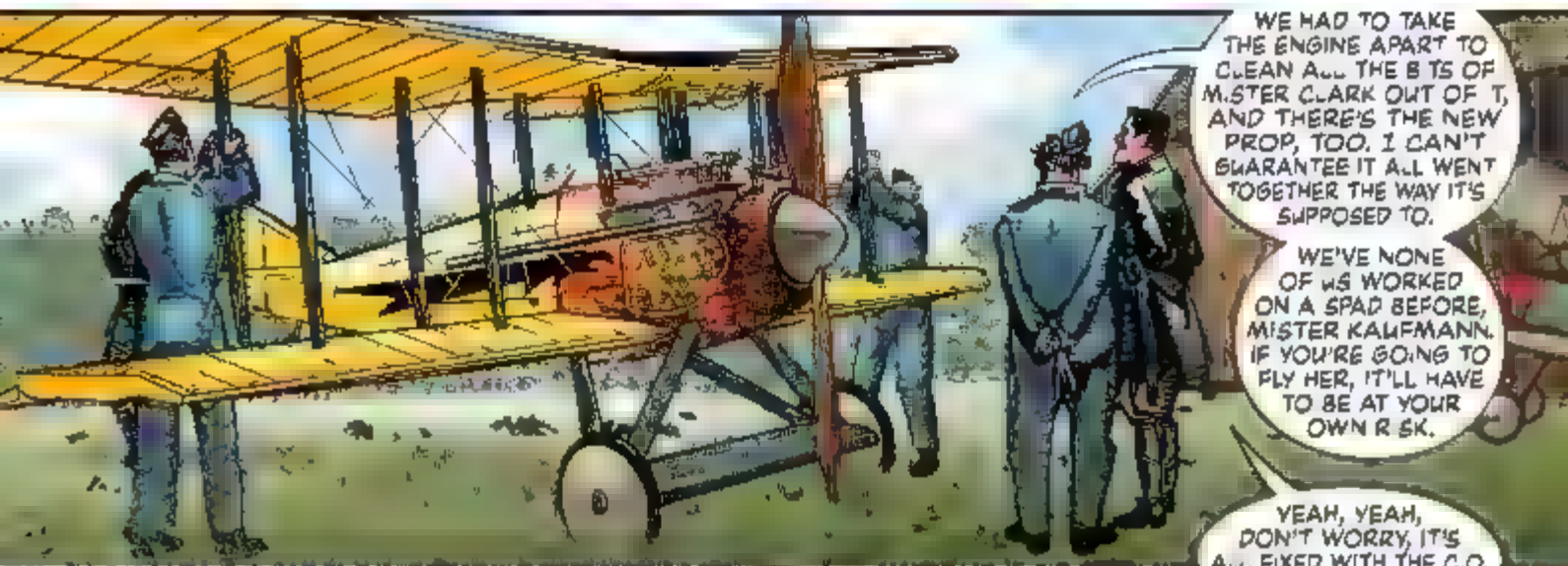


AT LAST.!



GOOD AS NEW, SERGEANT. YOU AND YOUR BOYS HAVE DONE A HELL OF A JOB.

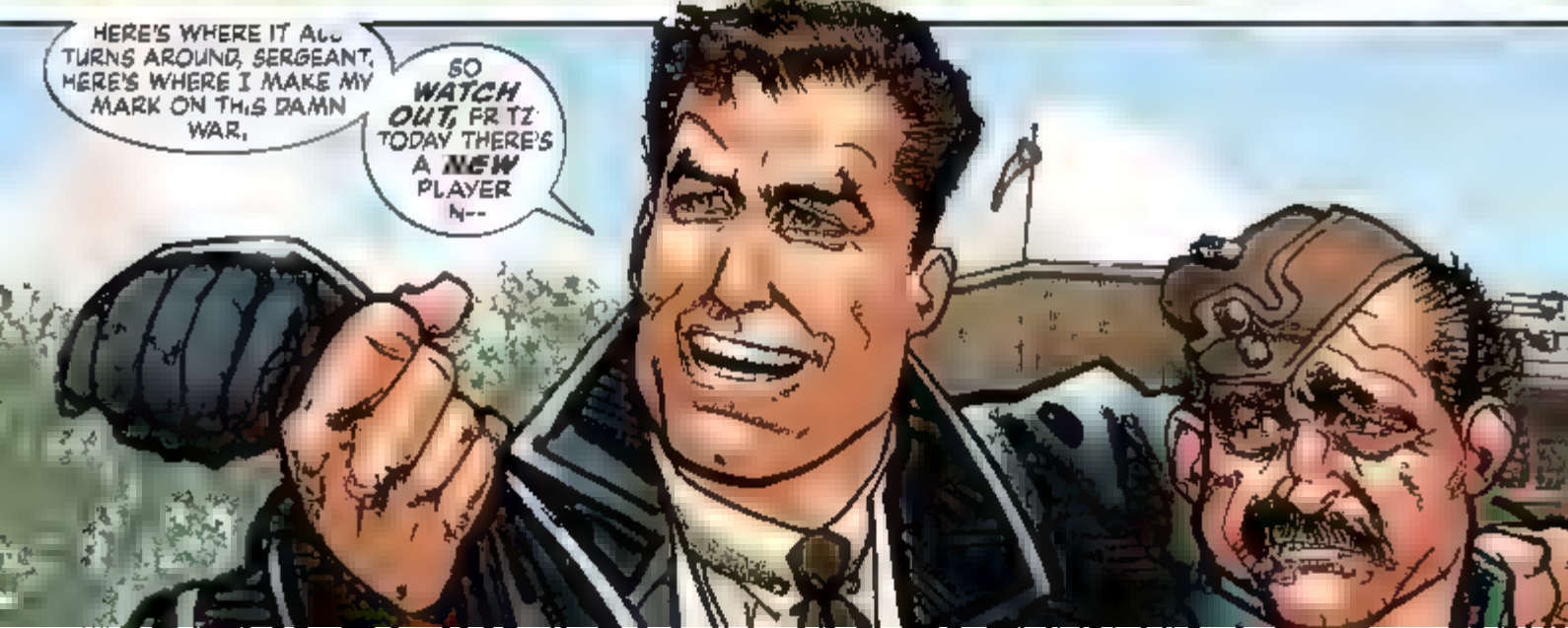
WELL, DON'T FORGET WHAT I TOLD YOU, SIR.



WE HAD TO TAKE THE ENGINE APART TO CLEAN ALL THE BITS OF MISTER CLARK OUT OF IT, AND THERE'S THE NEW PROP, TOO. I CAN'T GUARANTEE IT ALL WENT TOGETHER THE WAY IT'S SUPPOSED TO.

WE'VE NONE OF US WORKED ON A SPAD BEFORE, MISTER KAUFMANN. IF YOU'RE GOING TO FLY HER, IT'LL HAVE TO BE AT YOUR OWN RISK.

YEAH, YEAH, DON'T WORRY, IT'S ALL FIXED WITH THE C.O.



HERE'S WHERE IT ALL TURNS AROUND, SERGEANT. HERE'S WHERE I MAKE MY MARK ON THIS DAMN WAR.

SO WATCH OUT, FRITZ. TODAY THERE'S A NEW PLAYER N--



SHIT,

3: OH, WE HAVEN'T
GOT A HOPE IN
THE MORNING



WELL, I HOPE THAT'S SCRATCHED THAT PART CULAR ITCH.

MAJOR ROXBURGH-JONES.

CIGARETTE?



NO, I'D LIKE A TRANSFER OUT OF THIS SQUAD. AS SOON AS HUMANLY POSSIBLE.

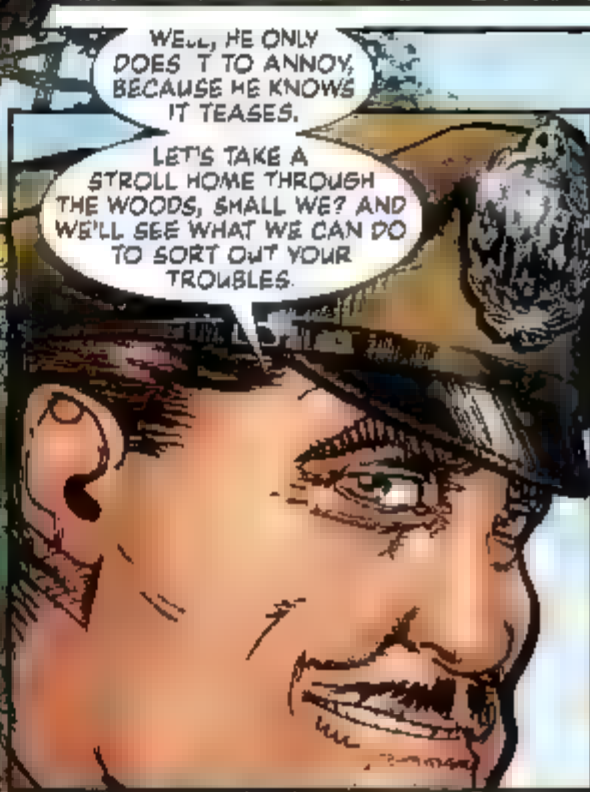
TOO BAD, I CAN'T SPARE YOU. WE LOST TWO MORE CHAPS JUST THIS MORNING.



I'D HAVE THOUGHT YOU'D BE HAPPY TO GET R.I.D OF ME. !

WHY? CAPTAIN BOOKER SAYS YOU'RE A DAMN GOOD PILOT. GOING FROM STRENGTH TO STRENGTH, HE TOLD ME.

BOOKER TALKS TO ME LIKE I'M A KID, MAJOR! AND CAPTAIN FRANKLIN NEVER MISSES A CHANCE TO NEEDLE THE HELL OUT OF ME!



WELL, HE ONLY DOES T TO ANNOY, BECAUSE HE KNOWS IT TEASES.

LET'S TAKE A STROLL HOME THROUGH THE WOODS, SMALL WE? AND WE'LL SEE WHAT WE CAN DO TO SORT OUT YOUR TROUBLES.

IT JUST ISN'T
THE WAY I THOUGHT IT
WOULD BE, S.R.

AND
HOW WAS
THAT?

I DON'T KNOW
I GUESS I THOUGHT
THERE'D BE...MORE
HEROISM..

AH, THAT.

MORE
CH VALRY..

CH VALRY?



YEAH, YOU
KNOW, LIKE KNIGHTS
IN OLDEN TIMES. LIKE
WE'RE THE KNIGHTS
OF THE SKY.

YOU FACE
THE OTHER GUY IN
A FAIR FIGHT, YOU DO IT
WITH HONOR, YOU RESPECT
HIM AND HE RESPECTS
YOU--BECAUSE YOU'RE
EQUALS...



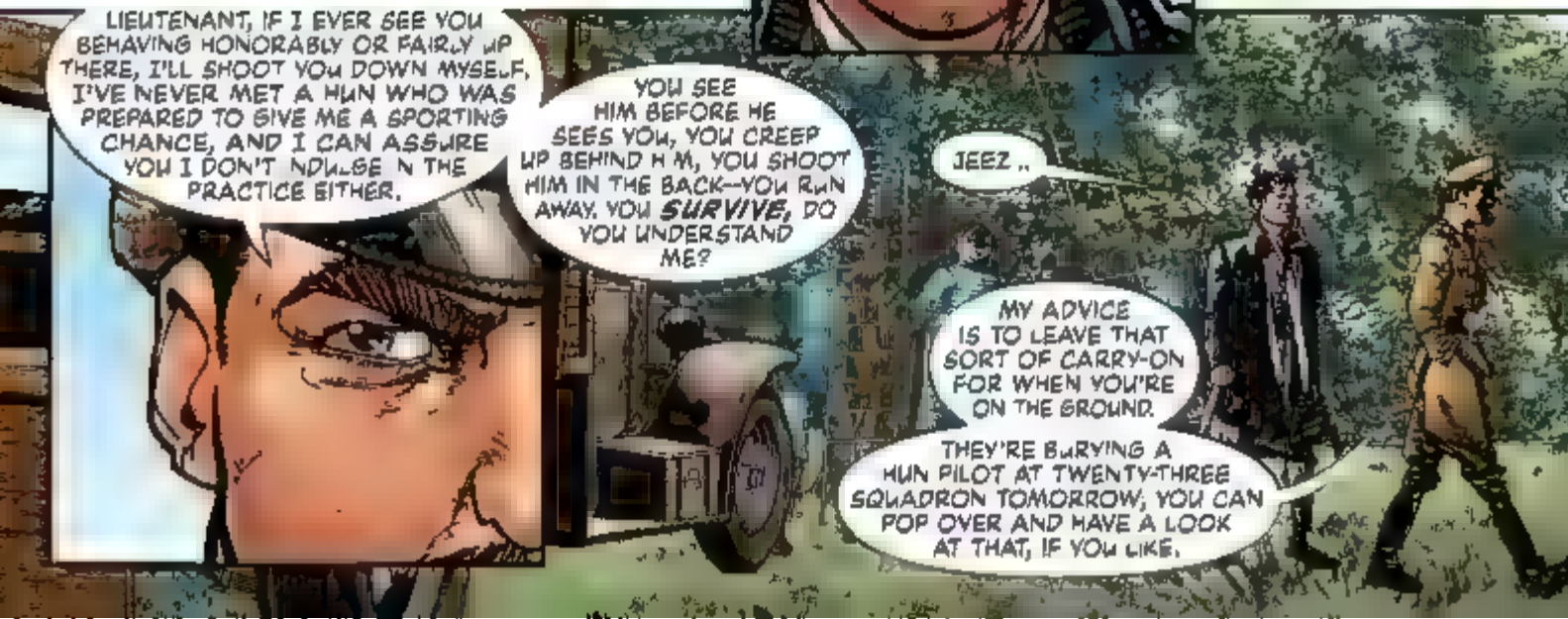
LIEUTENANT, IF I EVER SEE YOU
BEHAVING HONORABLY OR FAIRLY UP
THERE, I'LL SHOOT YOU DOWN MYSELF.
I'VE NEVER MET A HUN WHO WAS
PREPARED TO GIVE ME A SPORTING
CHANCE, AND I CAN ASSURE
YOU I DON'T NEED IN THE
PRACTICE EITHER.

YOU SEE
HIM BEFORE HE
SEES YOU, YOU CREEP
UP BEHIND HIM, YOU SHOOT
HIM IN THE BACK--YOU RUN
AWAY, YOU **SURVIVE**, DO
YOU UNDERSTAND
ME?

JEEZ ..

MY ADVICE
IS TO LEAVE THAT
SORT OF CARRY-ON
FOR WHEN YOU'RE
ON THE GROUND.

THEY'RE BURYING A
HUN PILOT AT TWENTY-THREE
SQUADRON TOMORROW, YOU CAN
POP OVER AND HAVE A LOOK
AT THAT, IF YOU LIKE.





THEY'RE
BURYING
HIM...?

YES, HE'S
DEAD. I IMAGINE IT
SEEMED LIKE THE
THING TO DO.

NO, I
MEAN

I KNOW
WHAT YOU
MEAN.

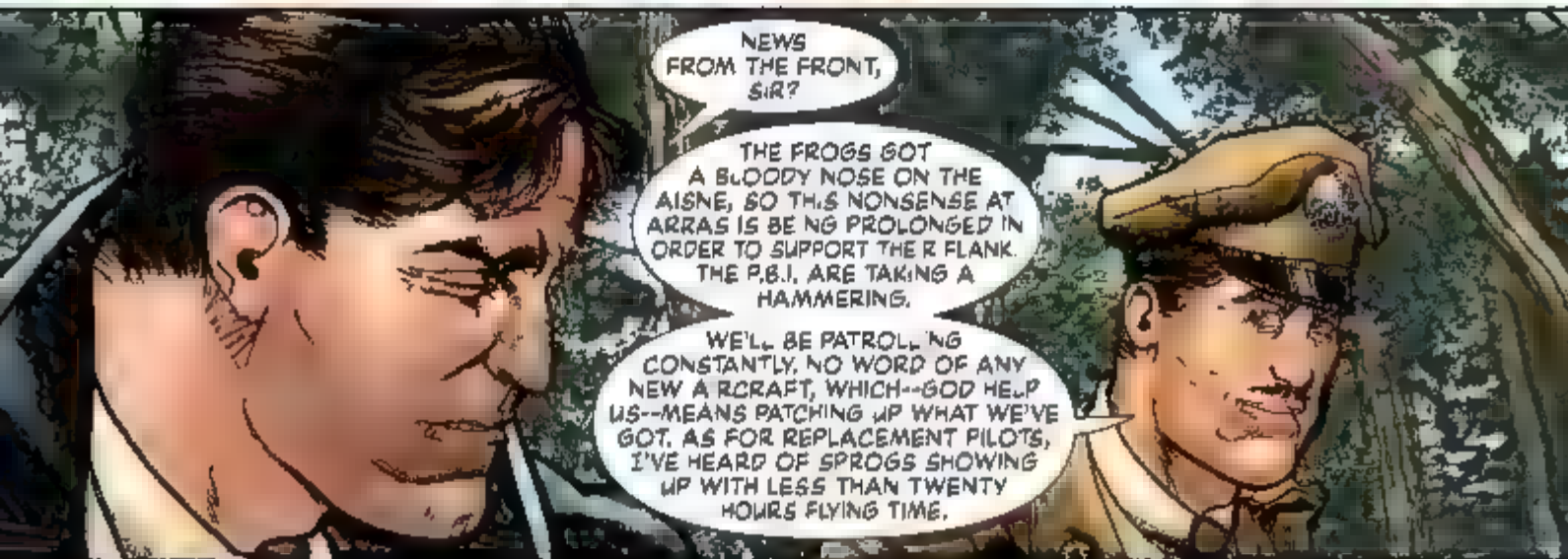
ONE OF THEIR CHAPS
KNOCKED HIM DOWN YESTERDAY
MORNING. HE DIED IN HOSPITAL. LATER
ON, THEY'RE GIVING HIM A PROPER
SEND-OFF--FULL MILITARY HONORS,
FIRING PARTY, THE WHOLE KIT
AND KABOODLE.



I GUESS
THAT'S SOME-
THING.

AS FOR HEROISM,
I'D HAVE THOUGHT CLIMBING
INTO A CLAPPED-OUT PUP TWO
OR THREE TIMES A DAY WAS
QUITE HEROIC ENOUGH.

PUT ALL THAT
CODSWALLOW OUT OF
YOUR HEAD, OLD BOY. IF THINGS
PAN OUT THE WAY I THINK
THEY WILL, I'M GOING
TO NEED YOU.



NEWS
FROM THE FRONT,
SIR?

THE FROGS GOT
A BLOODY NOSE ON THE
AISNE, SO THIS NONSENSE AT
ARRAS IS BEING PROLONGED IN
ORDER TO SUPPORT THEIR FLANK.
THE P.B.I. ARE TAKING A
HAMMERING.

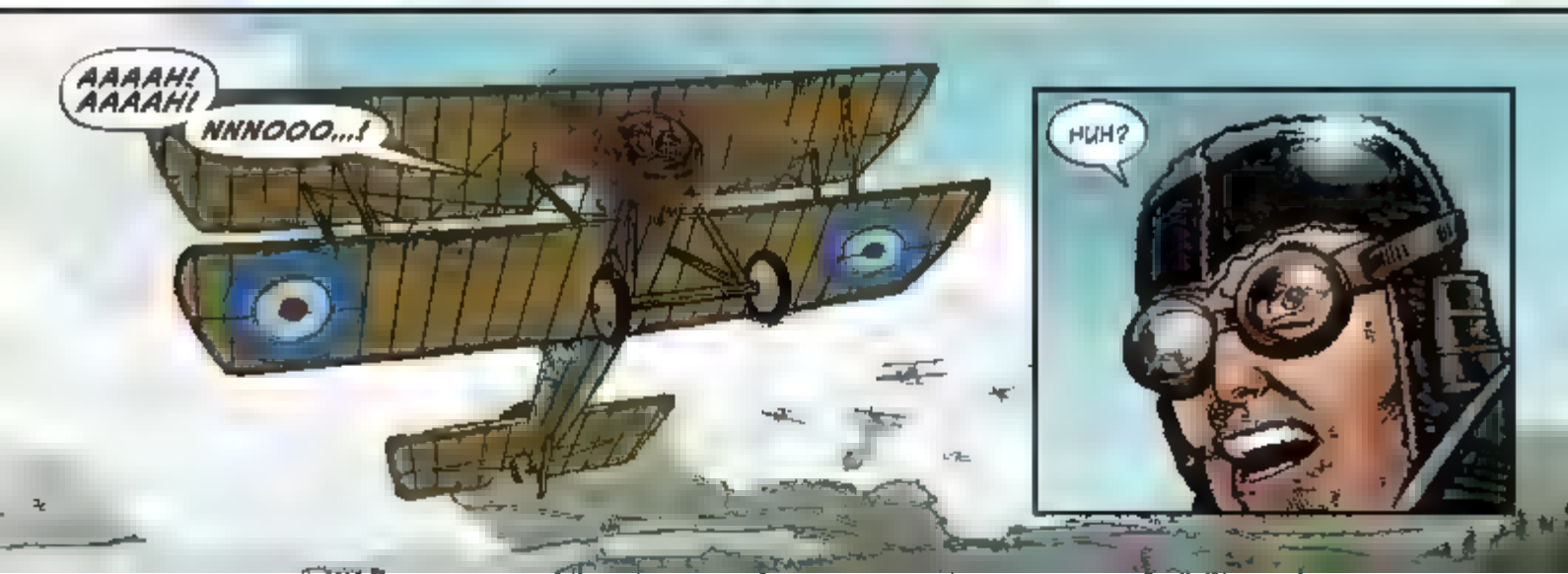
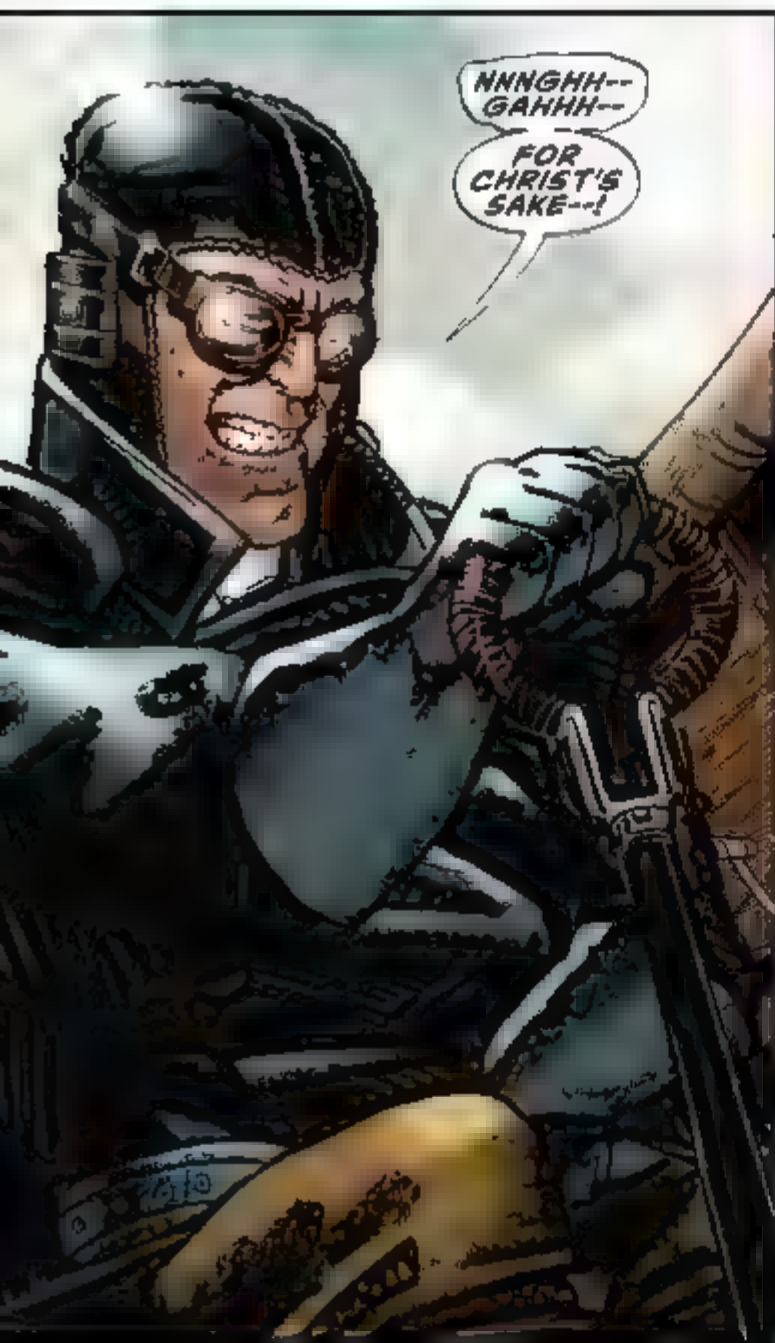
WE'LL BE PATROLLING
CONSTANTLY. NO WORD OF ANY
NEW AIRCRAFT, WHICH--GOD HELP
US--MEANS PATCHING UP WHAT WE'VE
GOT. AS FOR REPLACEMENT PILOTS,
I'VE HEARD OF SPROGS SHOWING
UP WITH LESS THAN TWENTY
HOURS FLYING TIME.

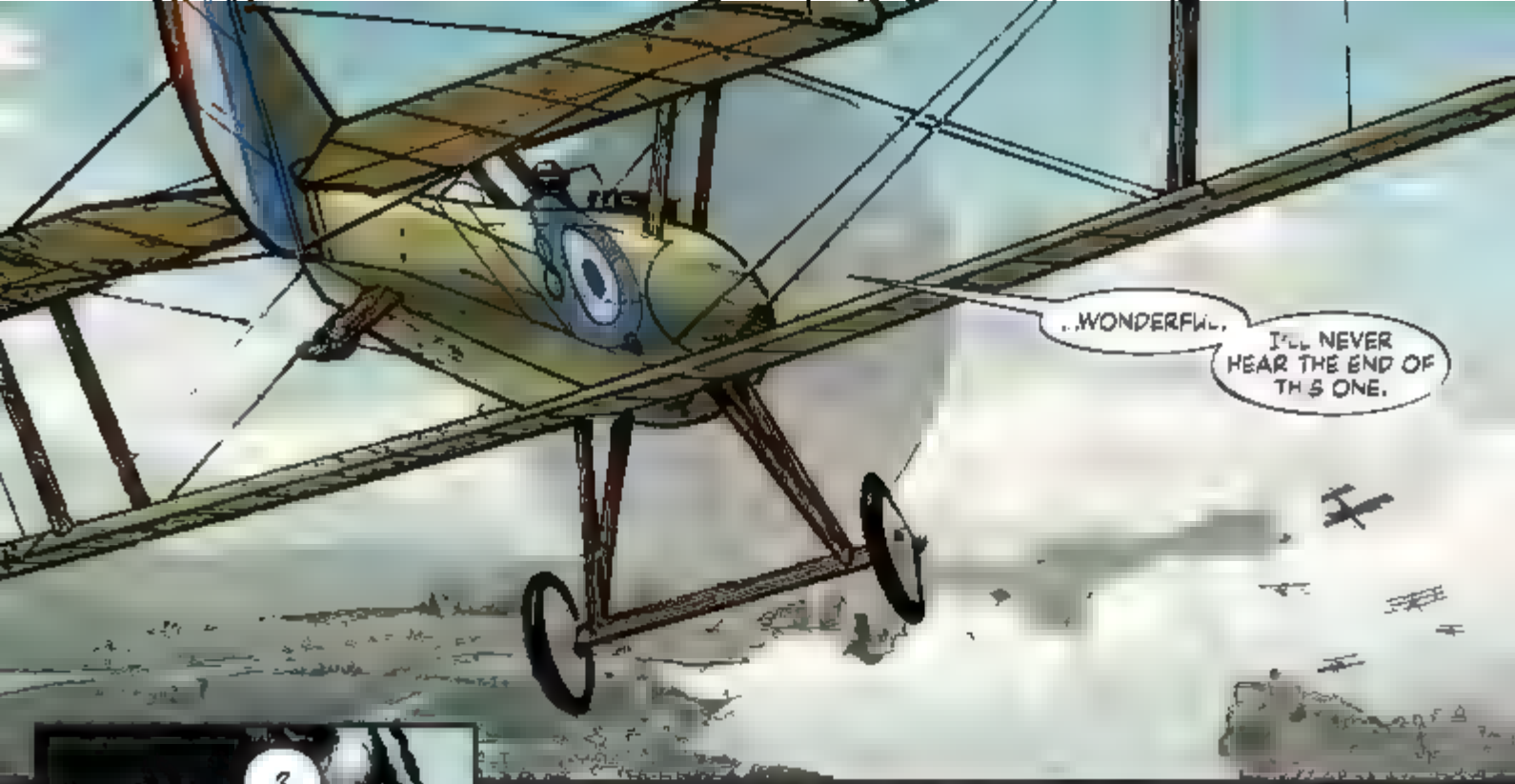


TWENTY.
SAY WHO ARE
THE P.B.I.?

FOUR BLOODY
NEANTRY.

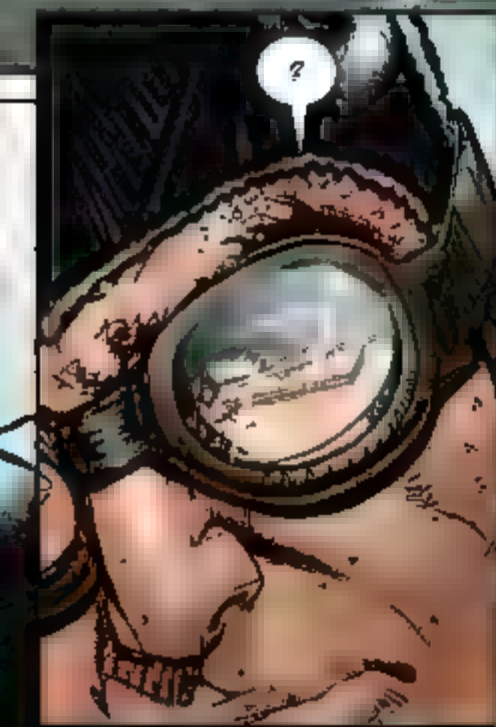
NOT MUCH
CHIVALRY IN THEIR
GAME, EITHER.



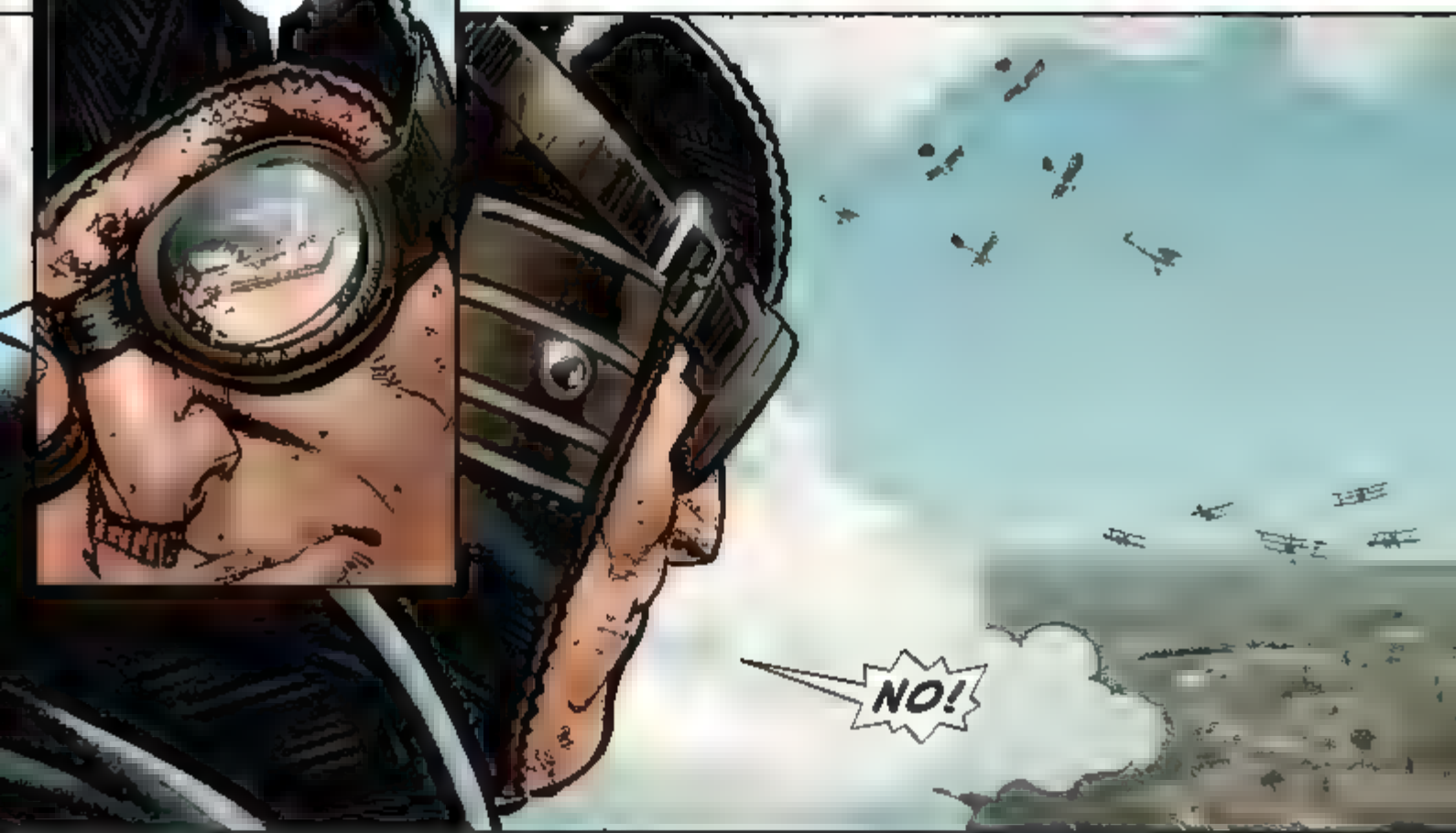


..WONDERFUL.

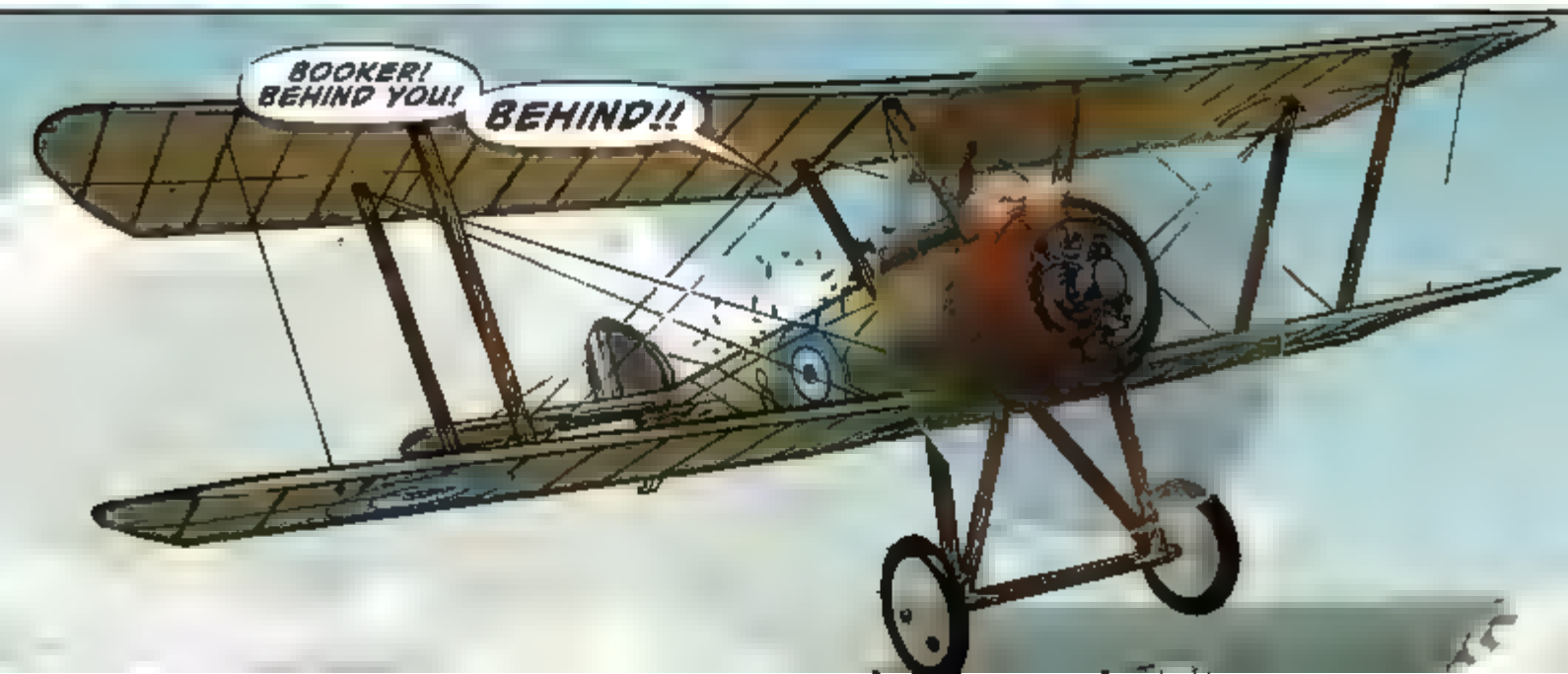
I'LL NEVER
HEAR THE END OF
THIS ONE.



?

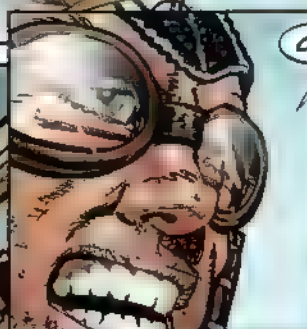


NO!

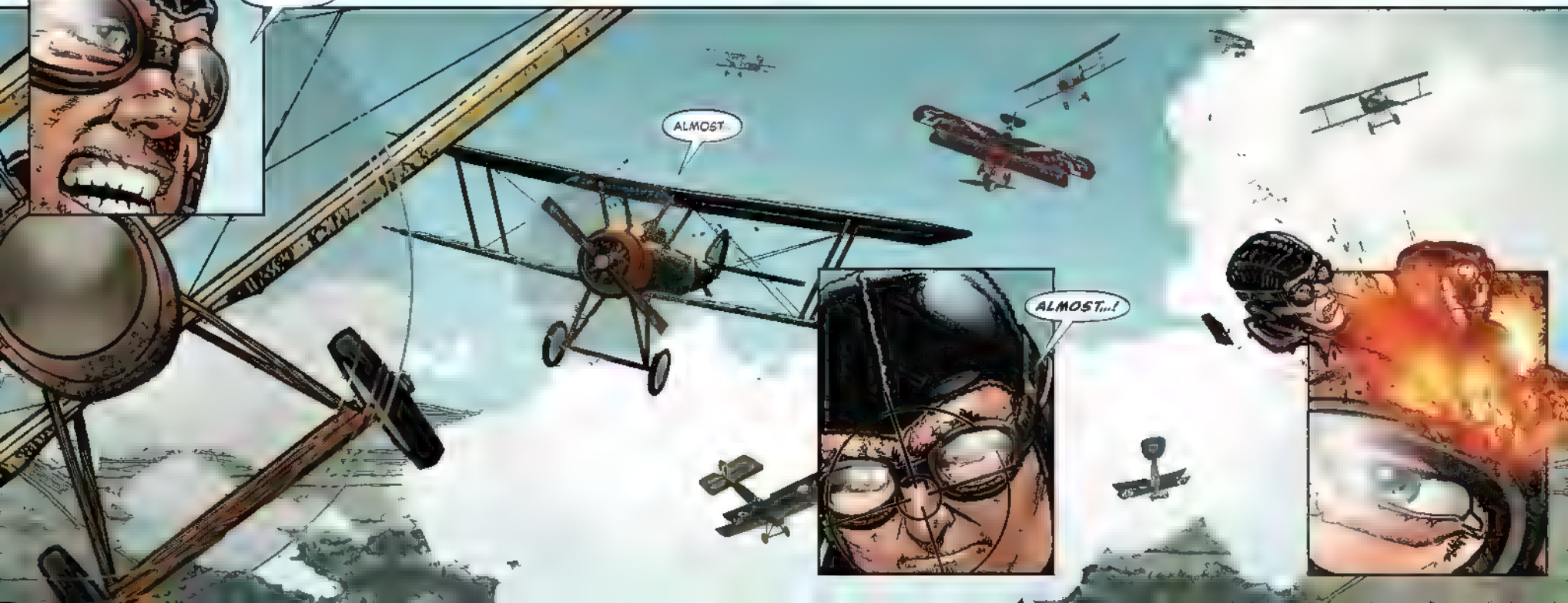


**BOOKER!
BEHIND YOU!**

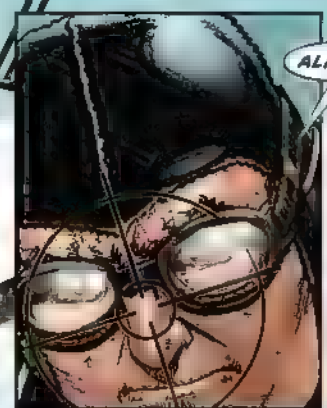
BEHIND!!



CHRIST!



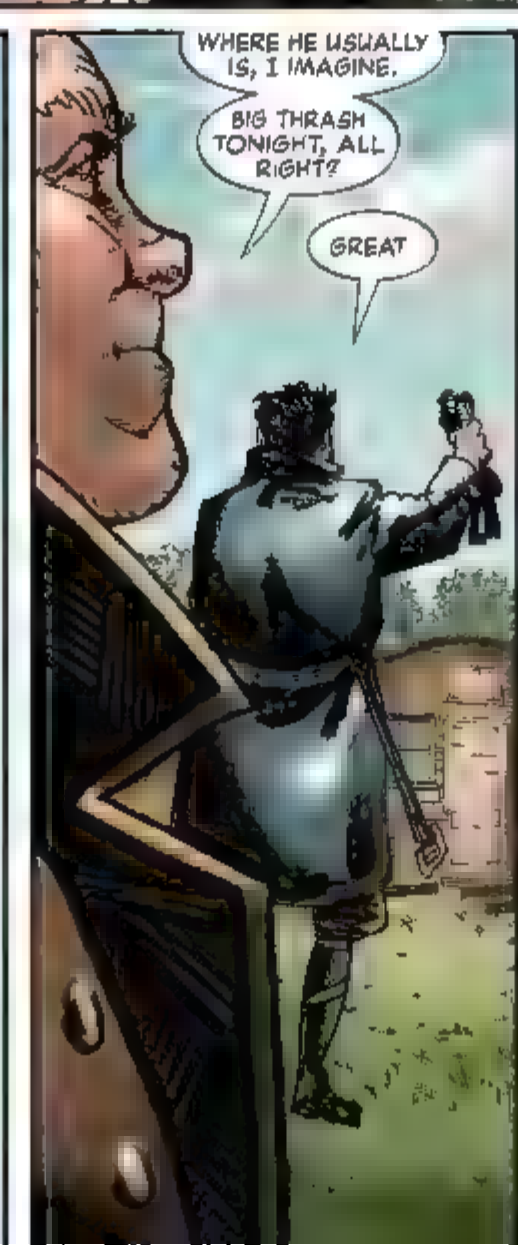
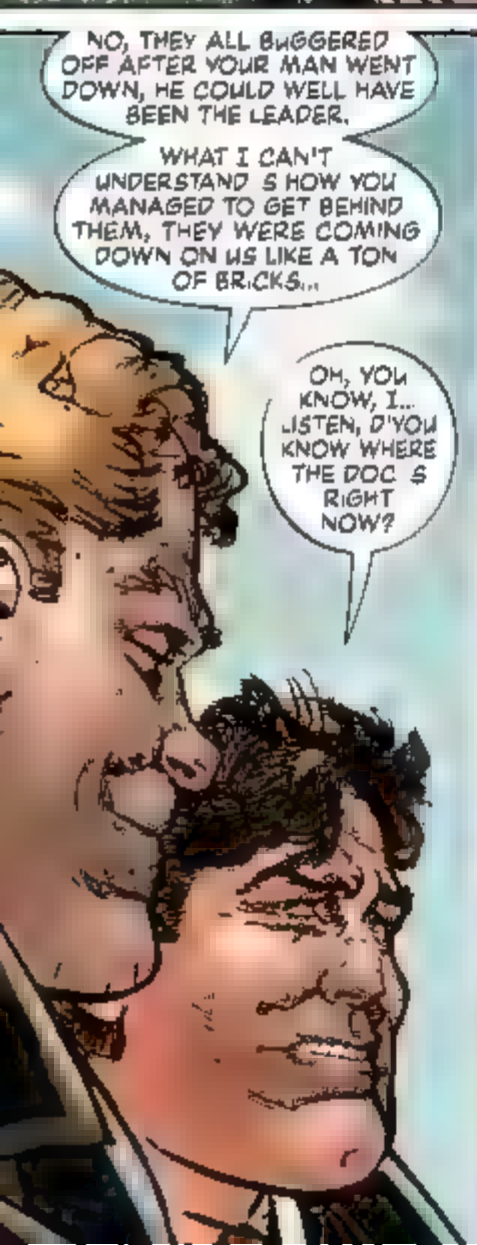
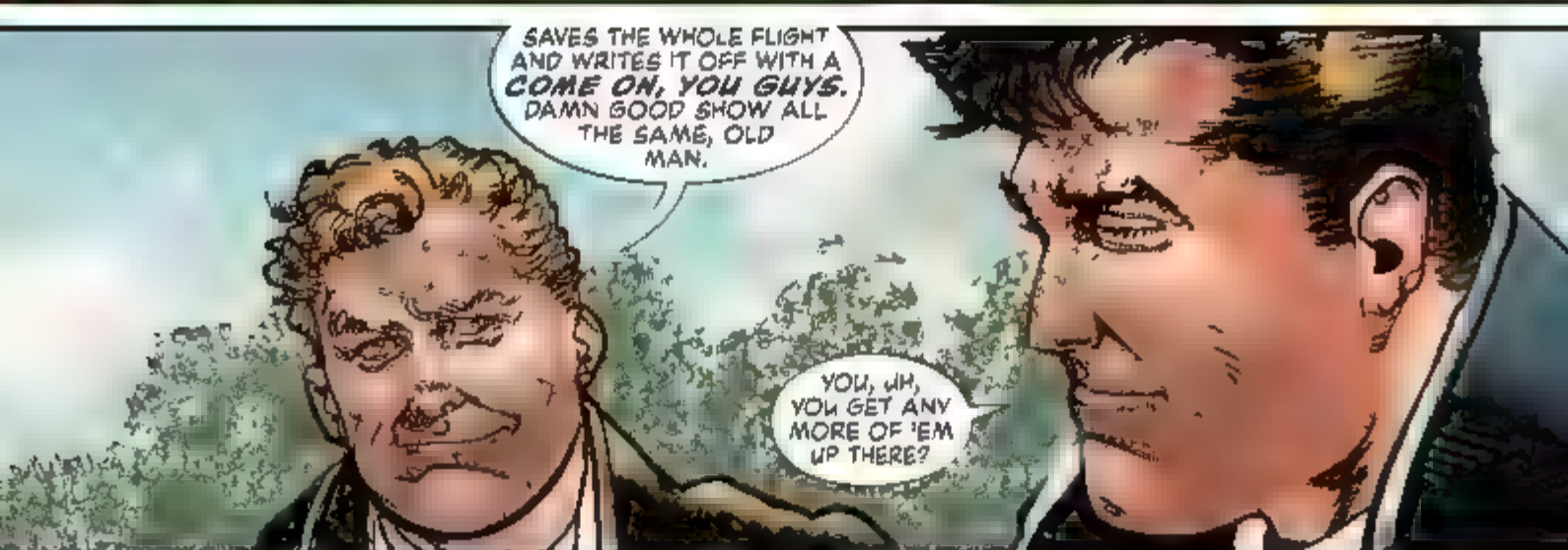
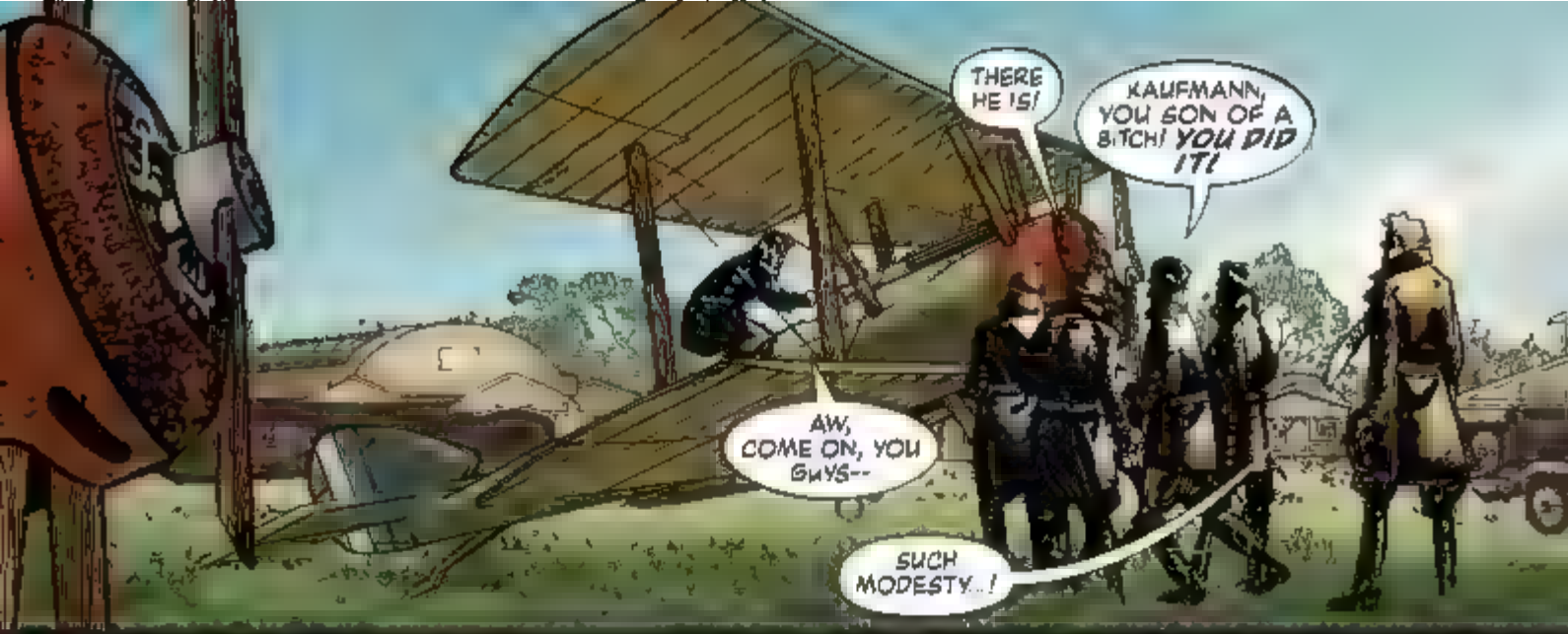
ALMOST

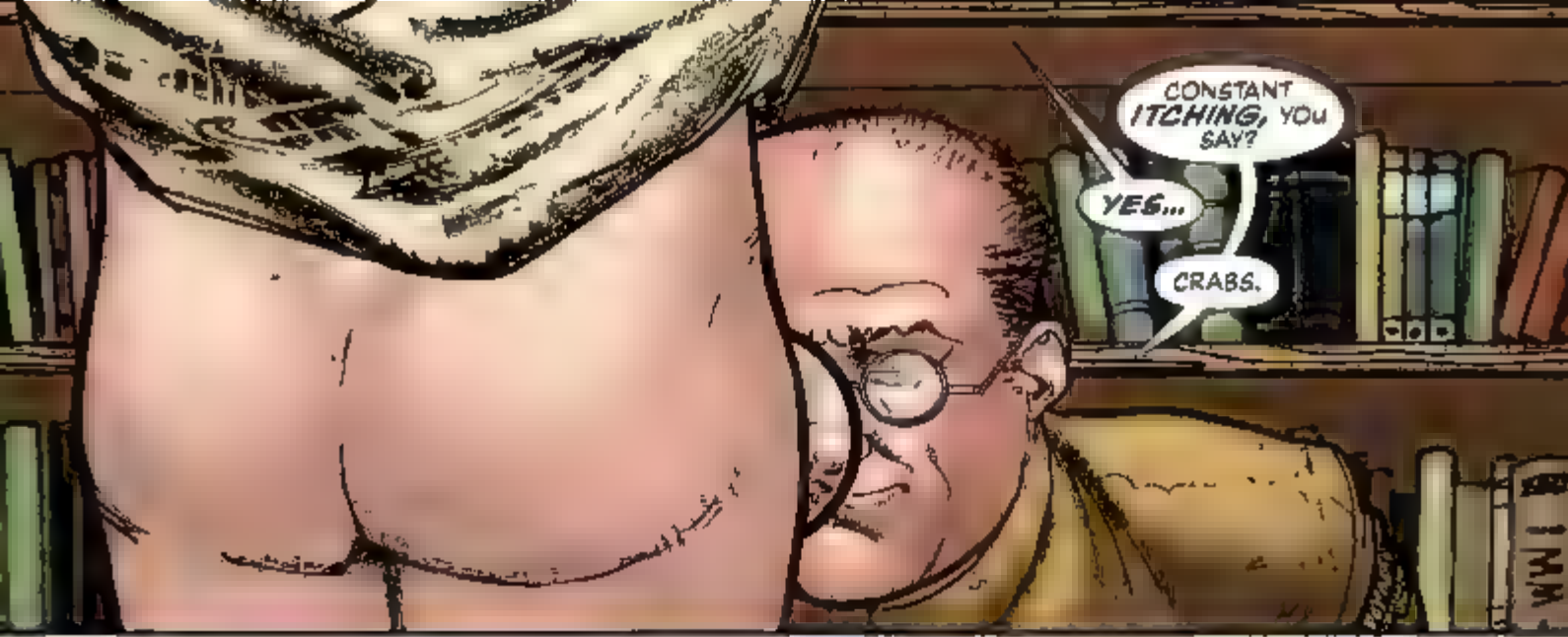


ALMOST...!









CONSTANT
ITCHING, YOU
SAY?

YES...

CRABS.



COME
AGAIN?

PUBIC LICE,
OLD BOY. ALL RIGHT,
YOU CAN PULL YOUR
BRITCHES UP NOW.



SOME SORDID TRYST
WITH ONE OF THE LOCAL
TARTS, NO DOUBT. AH WELL,
I SUPPOSE IT CAN'T BE
HELPED..

A WHORE? DOC,
THE ONLY WOMAN
I'VE BEEN WITH'S
MY GIRL, AND THAT
WAS ONLY THE
ONCE! AND
SHE'S--

SHE'S..

OH
NO.



WHY DO THINGS JUST KEEP HAPPENING...?

THERE IS A SILVER LINING TO THIS PARTICULAR CLOUD. IF YOU HADN'T BEEN DISTRACTED BY THE NEED TO GIVE YOUR BOOLES A SCRATCH, YOU'D NEVER HAVE SEEN THE GERMANS ATTACKING B-FLIGHT.

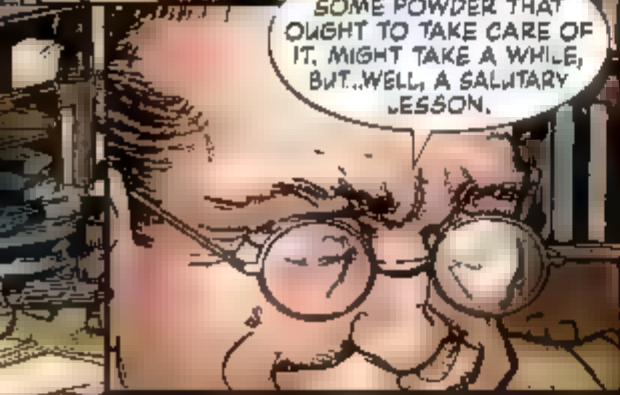
NO, BUT I WOULDN'T VE FLOWN MY SPAD INTO A TREE, EITHER.

IT WASN'T THE GODDAMN PROP AT ALL, IT WAS ME WITH MY HANDS DOWN MY PANTS WHEN I SHOULD'VE BEEN FLYING THE PLANE

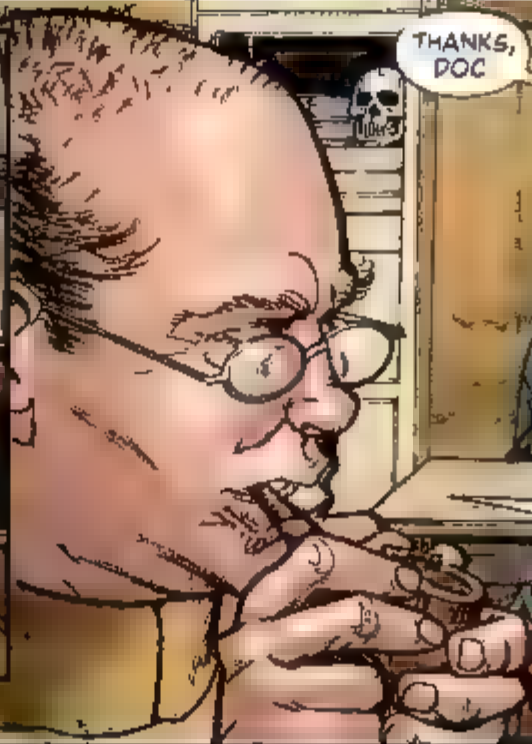


IT'LL BE OUR LITTLE SECRET

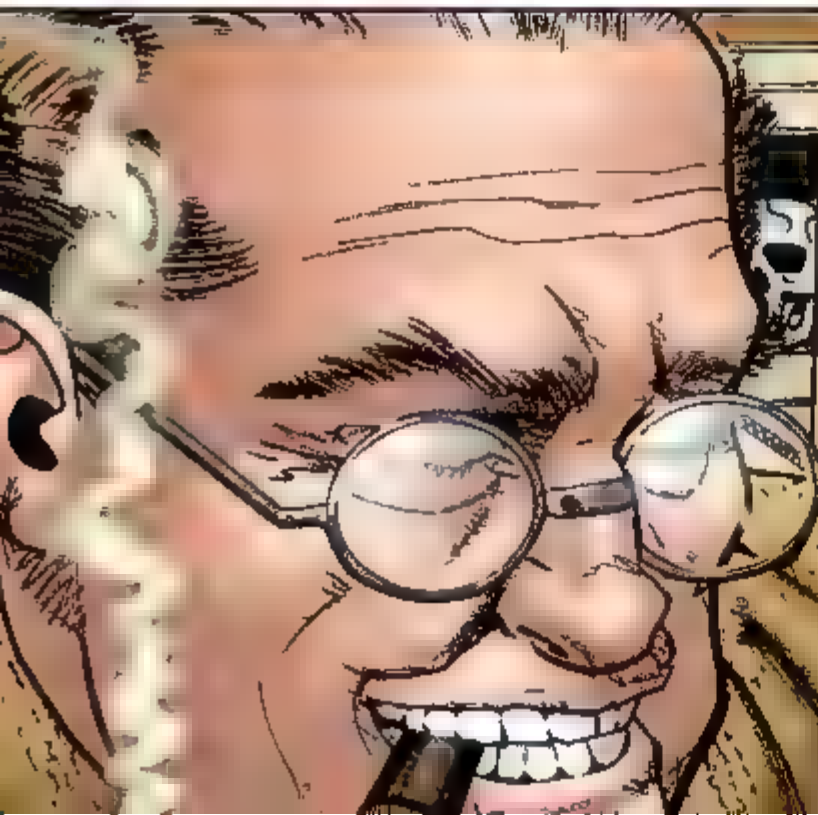
I'LL GIVE YOU SOME POWDER THAT OUGHT TO TAKE CARE OF IT. MIGHT TAKE A WHILE, BUT...WELL, A SALUTARY LESSON.



THANKS, DOC



JUST BE CAREFUL WHERE YOU DIP YOUR WICK IN FUTURE. IF IT'D BEEN THE CLAP I'D HAVE GROUNDED YOU ON THE SPOT



YEAH?

ABSOLUTELY. NOBODY FLIES WITH THE POX, OLD CHAP.







OH, THE
YOUNG AVIATOR LAY
DYING.

YOU ENGLISH
ARE **DECADENT**,
FRANKLIN--!

CAPTAIN
THE LORD FRANKLIN
V.C., IF YOU DON'T
MIND.

DECADENT!



THAT'S
WHY YOU CAN'T
FIGHT THE DAMN WAR
ON YOUR OWN, YOU
GOT TOO USED TO
EASY LIVING. THAT'S
WHY US YANKS'VE
GOT TO COME AND
SAVE YOU...

A MONSTROUS
SLIGHT! WELL, THERE'S
ONLY ONE WAY TO SETTLE
THIS!

AND AS IN
THE HANGER HE LAY...
HE LAY...

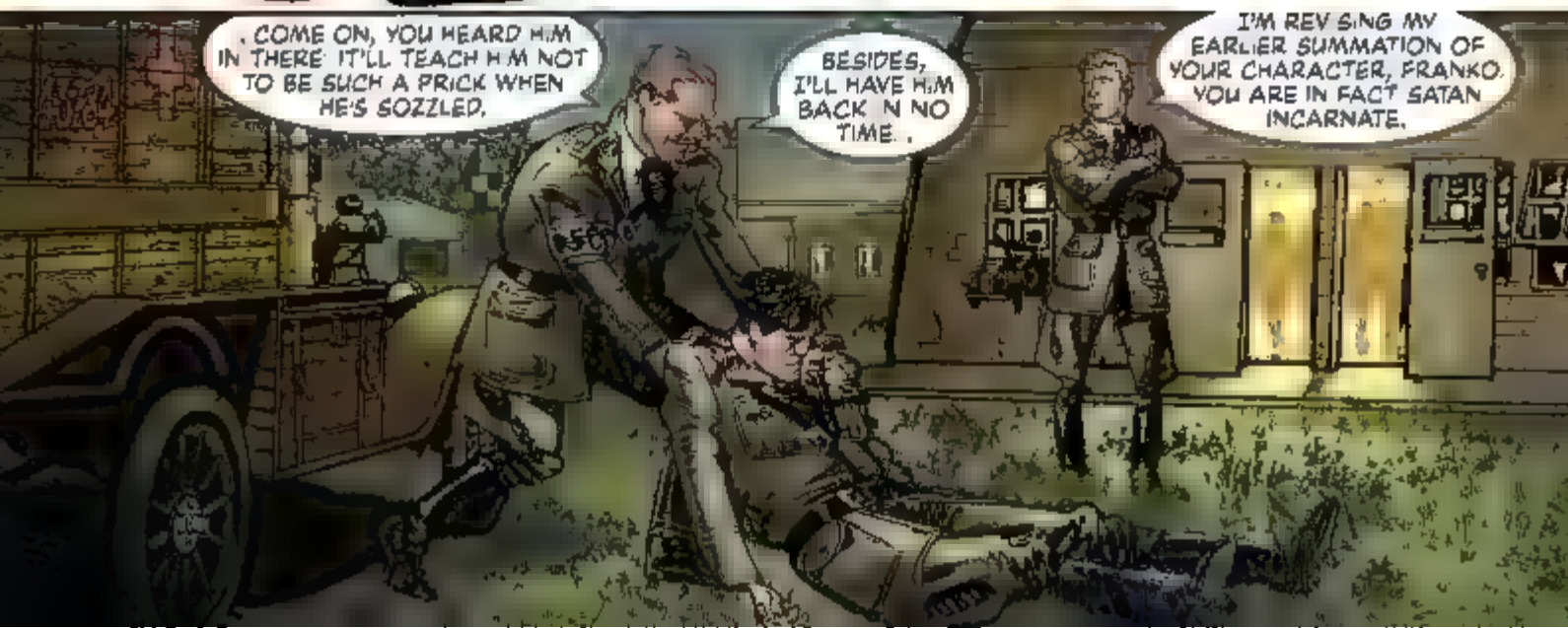
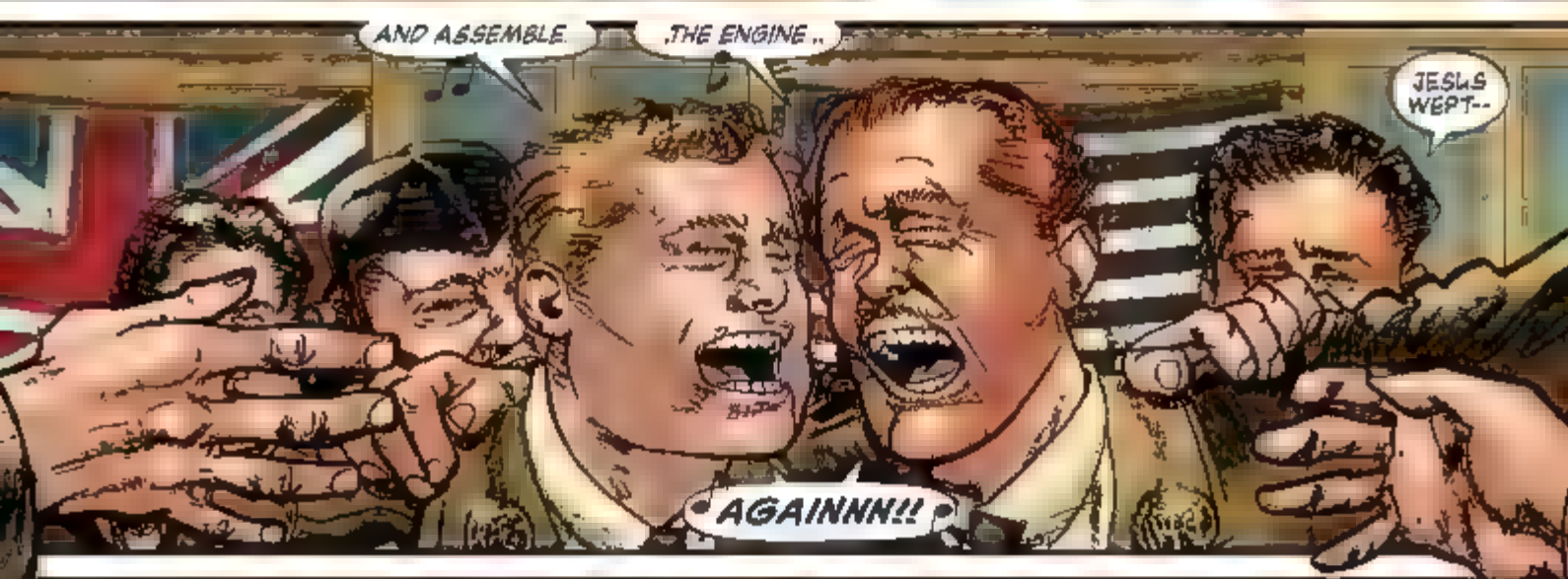
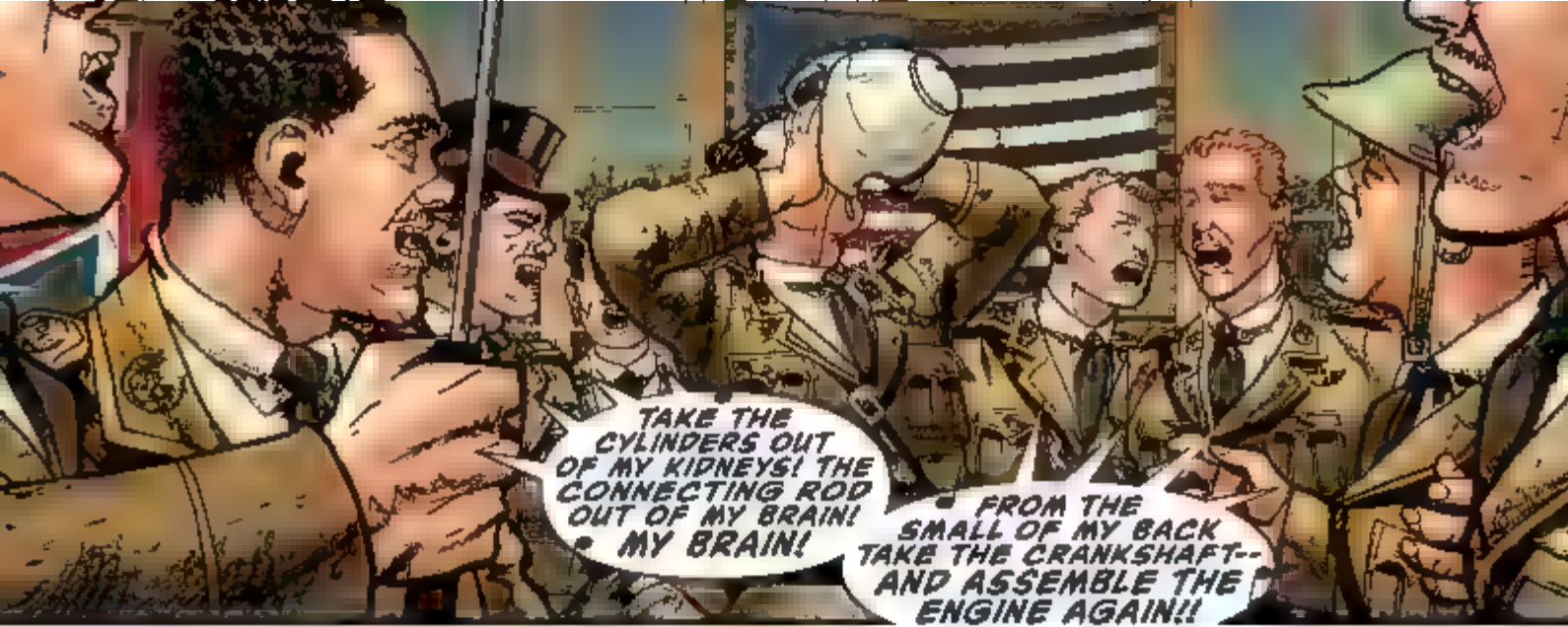
TO THE
MECHANICS WHO
ROUND HIM WERE
STANDING.

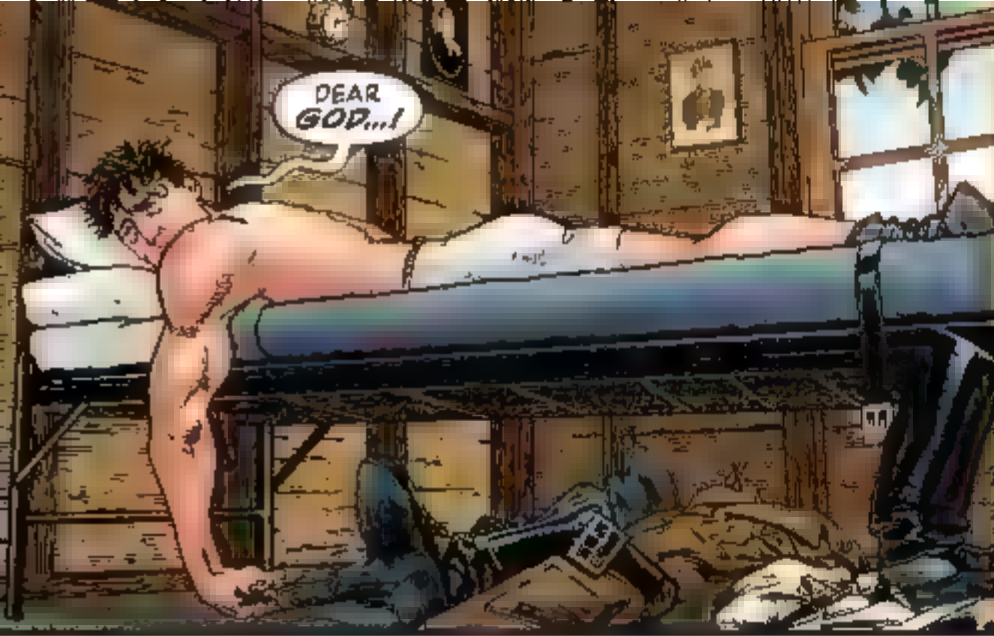
JUG OF PUNCH
EACH, CAN'T FINISH IT,
YOU'RE A DECADENT
FANSY.

YOU
FRST.

DONE!

THESE
LAST PARTING
WORDS DID HE
SAYYY.



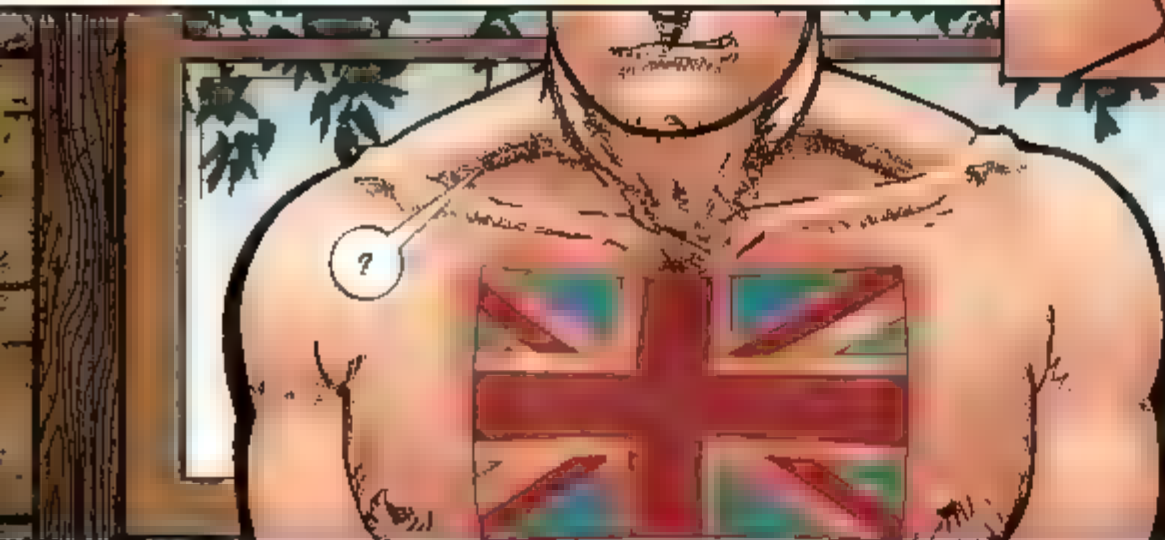


DEAR
GOD!!!

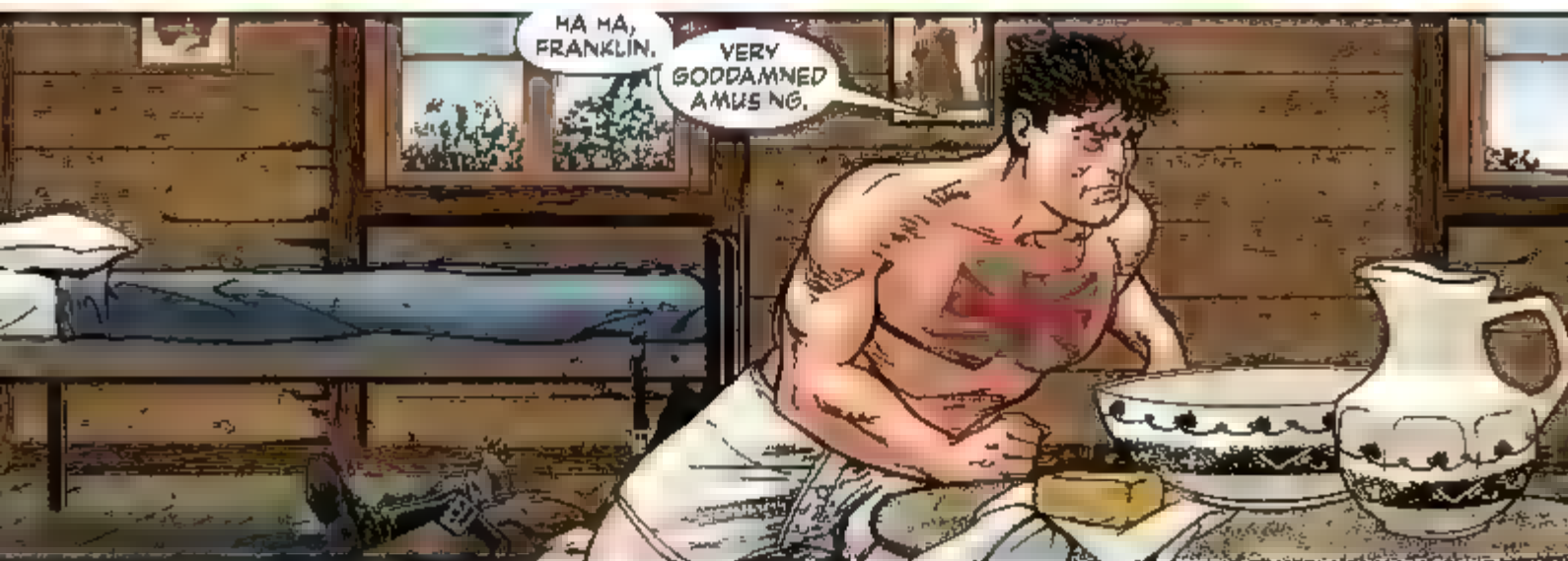


WHAT WAS I
DRINKING.

WHAT
WAS I EVEN...
THINKING.



?



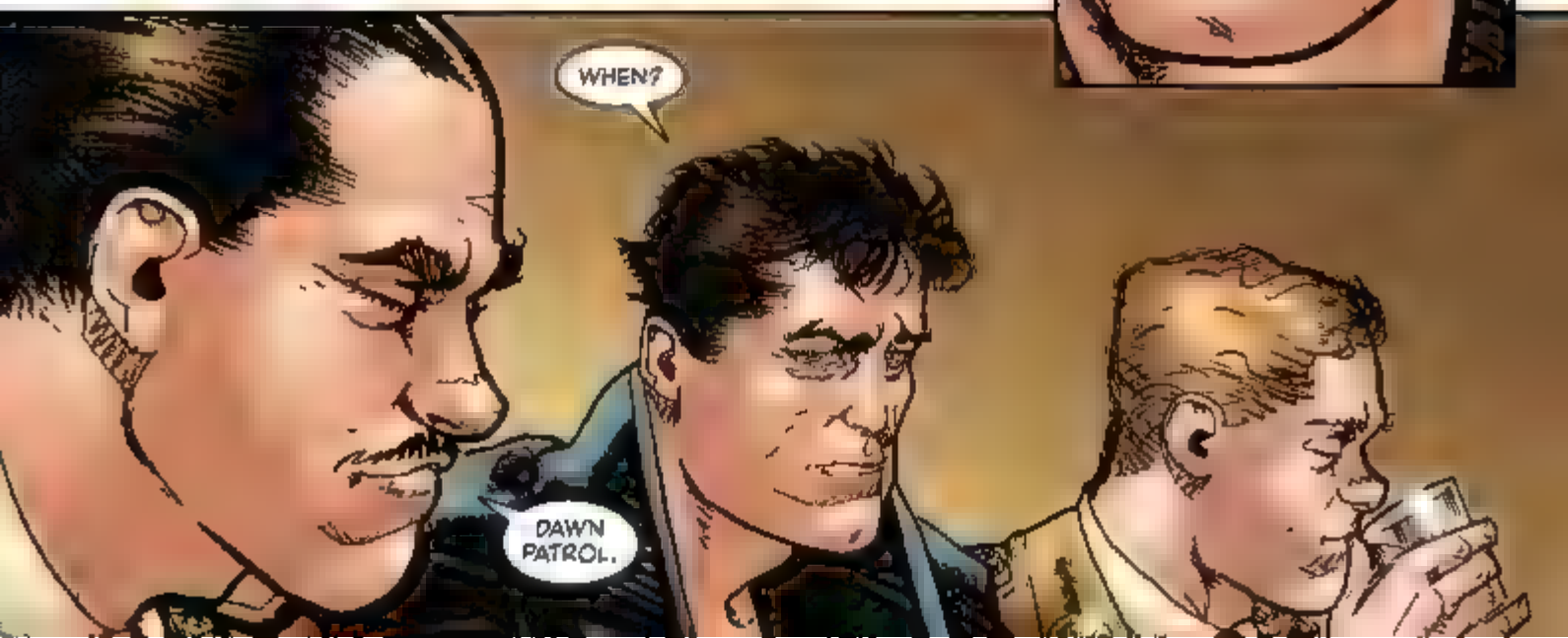
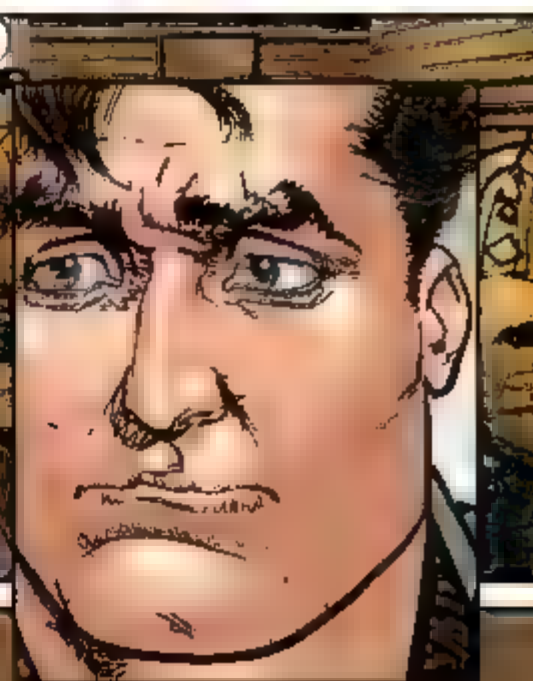
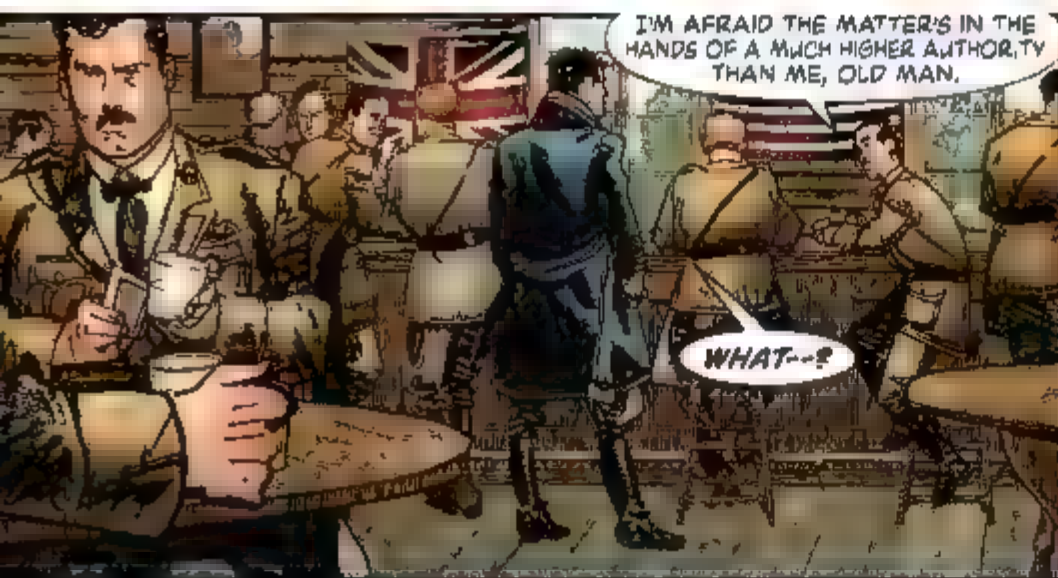
HA HA,
FRANKLIN.

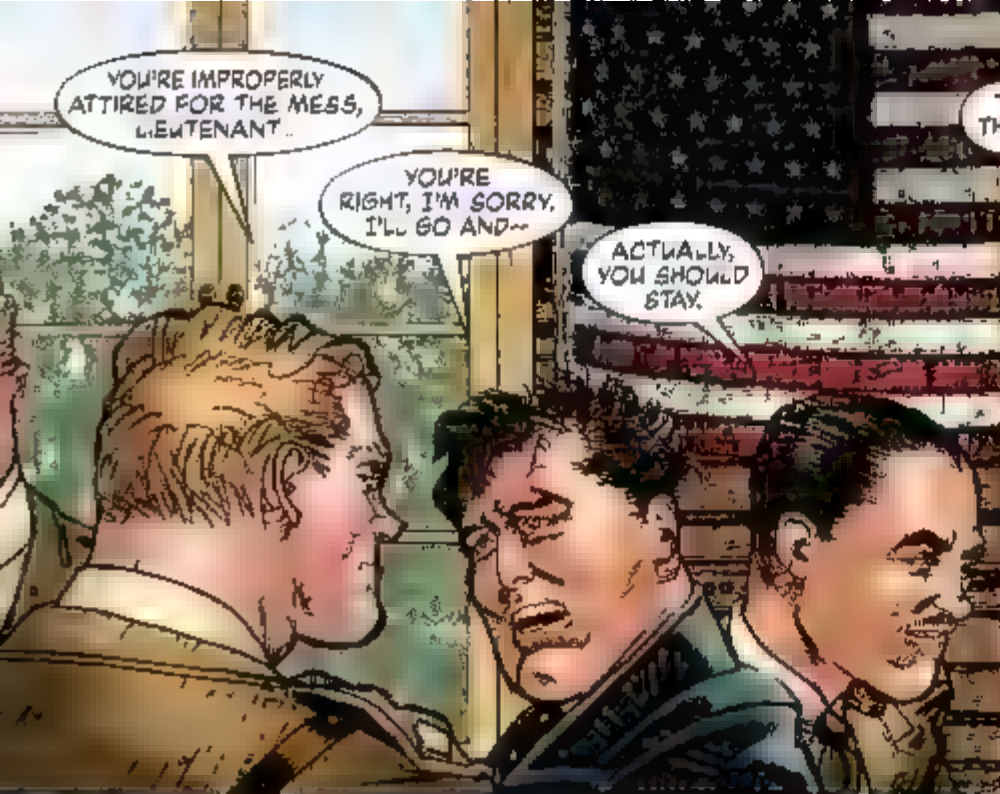
VERY
GODDAMNED
AMUSING.



IT'S NOT
COMING OFF!
IT'S NOT!

JESUS CHRIST
ALMIGHTY, IT'S A
TATTOO!!





YOU'RE IMPROPERLY
ATTIRED FOR THE MESS,
LIEUTENANT...

YOU'RE
RIGHT, I'M SORRY.
I'LL GO AND--

ACTUALLY,
YOU SHOULD
STAY.

TWO
THINGS.

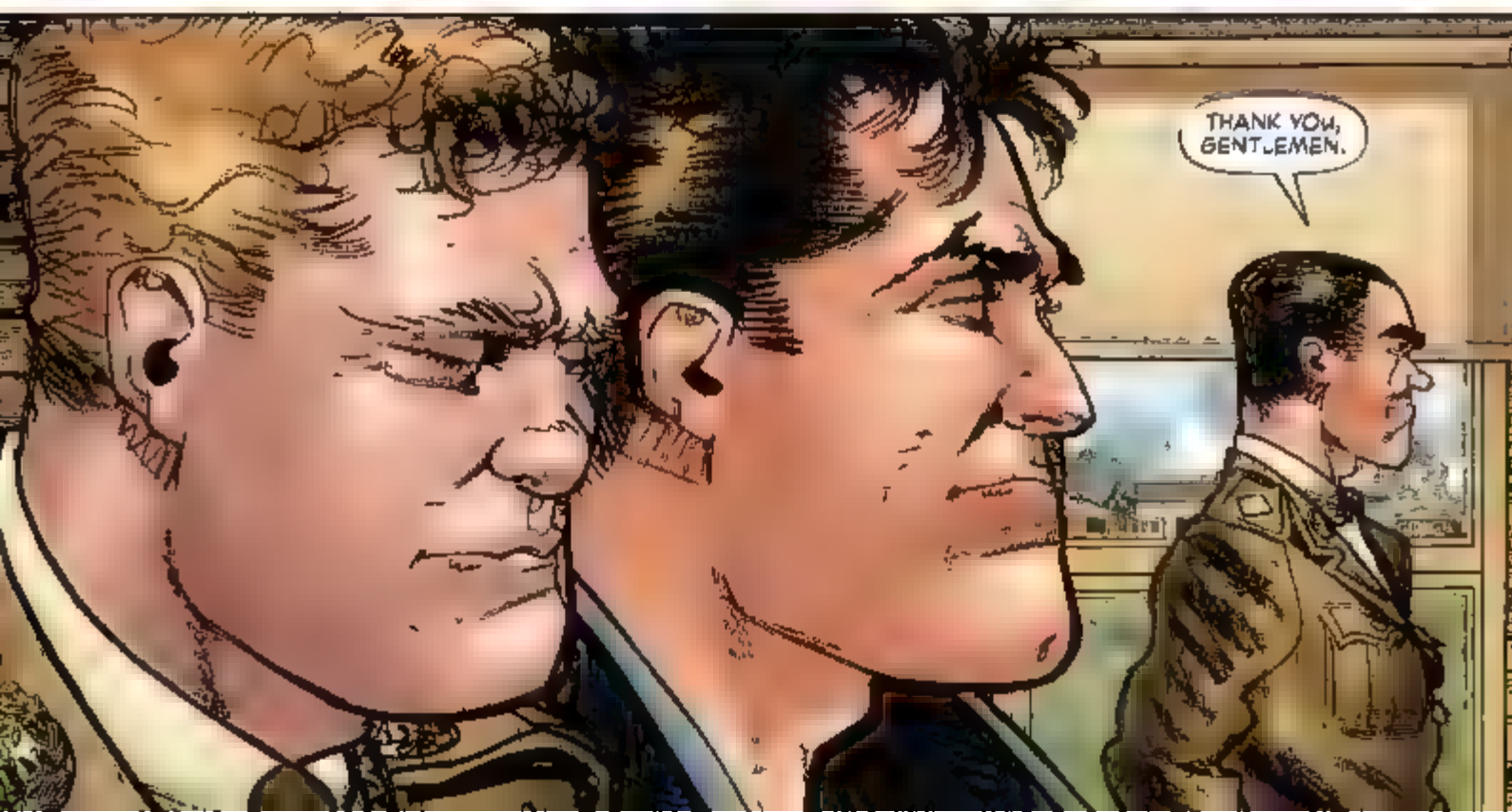
CAPTAIN FRANKLIN'S
FLIGHT WAS ATTACKED BY A
PAIR OF TRIPLANES, WHICH WERE
QUITE NATURALLY ASSUMED TO
BE OUR SOPWITHS. THEY
WERE NOT.

THEY'VE BEEN
REPORTED BY OTHER SQUADRONS,
SO IT RATHER LOOKS AS IF FRANKLIN HAS
GOTTEN HIMSELF A NEW BUS.



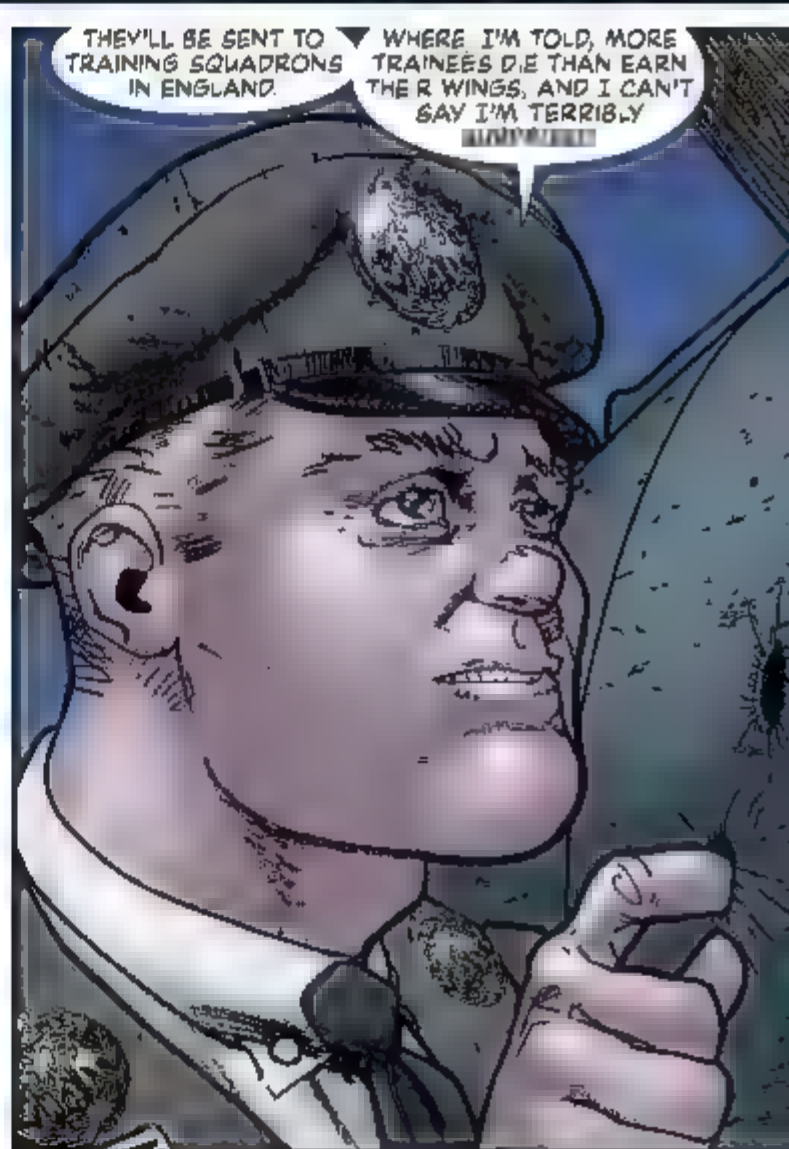
THAT'S THE BAD NEWS. THE GOOD
NEWS IS THAT AS OF NEXT WEEK, THIS
SQUADRON WILL RE-EQUIP WITH THE S.E. 5
SCOUT. WE'RE BIDDING FAREWELL TO
THE PUP AT LAST.

FURTHERMORE, A
NUMBER OF REPLACEMENT
PILOTS ARE ON THE R WAY, AND
NEW COMMANDERS FOR A-
AND C-FLIGHTS WILL BE
APPOINTED.



THANK YOU,
GENTLEMEN.







OH?

T JUST
CARRIES ON,
DOESN'T T?

THE WAR,
I MEAN.

IT DOESN'T MATTER
IF FRANKLIN WAS A LORD,
OR YOU DON'T WANT TO BE AN
AMERICAN, OR I.. WANT WHAT
I WANT. THE WAR COULDN'T
GIVE A FIG FOR WHAT WE
CARE ABOUT.

PEOPLE
COME AND GO, BUT
IT JUST CARRIES
ON.

ROLLS
OVER US.



MM.

YOU'VE
PRETTY
MUCH--

YOU
KNOW WHAT I'VE
DECIDED?



FRANKLIN HAD TH S THING
TATTOOED ON ME AS A JOKE.
BUT NOW, EVERY TIME I LOOK
AT IT? I'M GOING TO BE
DAMN PROUD.

I'M GOING
TO THINK OF
H.M.

WELL,
GOOD FOR YOU,
OLD MAN.



I
THINK
I CAN
HONESTLY
SAY THAT
HE'D LIKE
THAT.

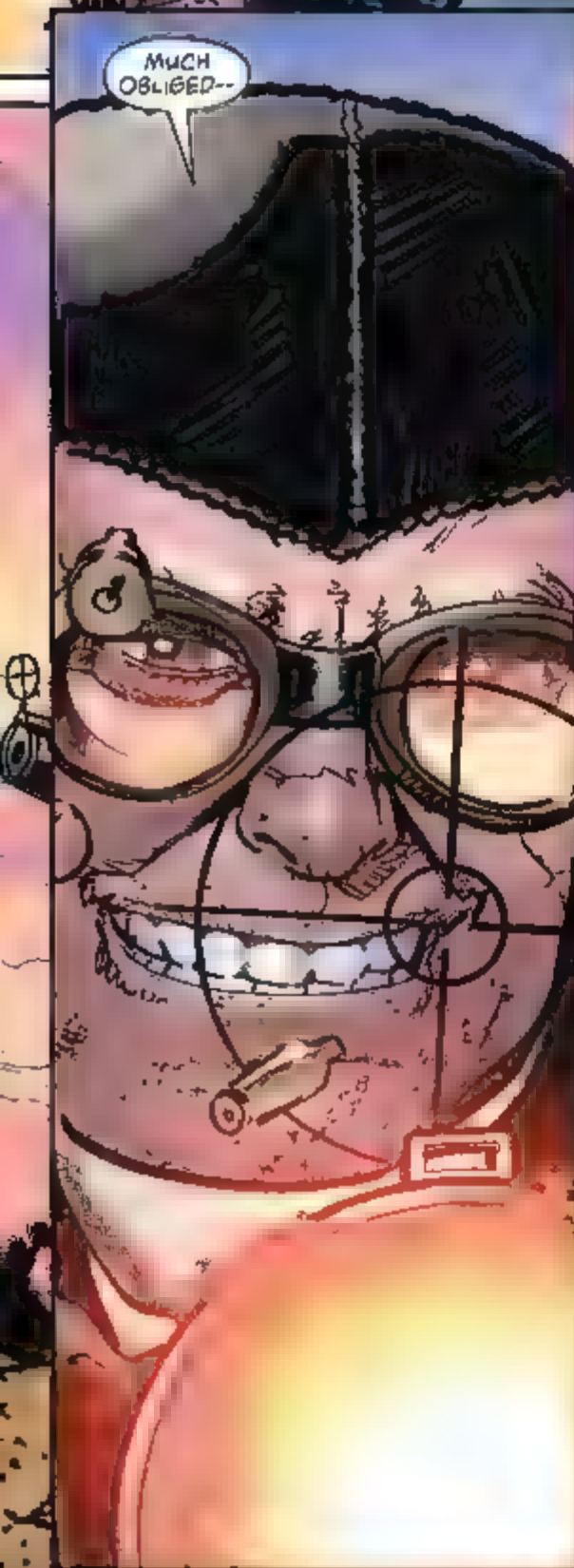
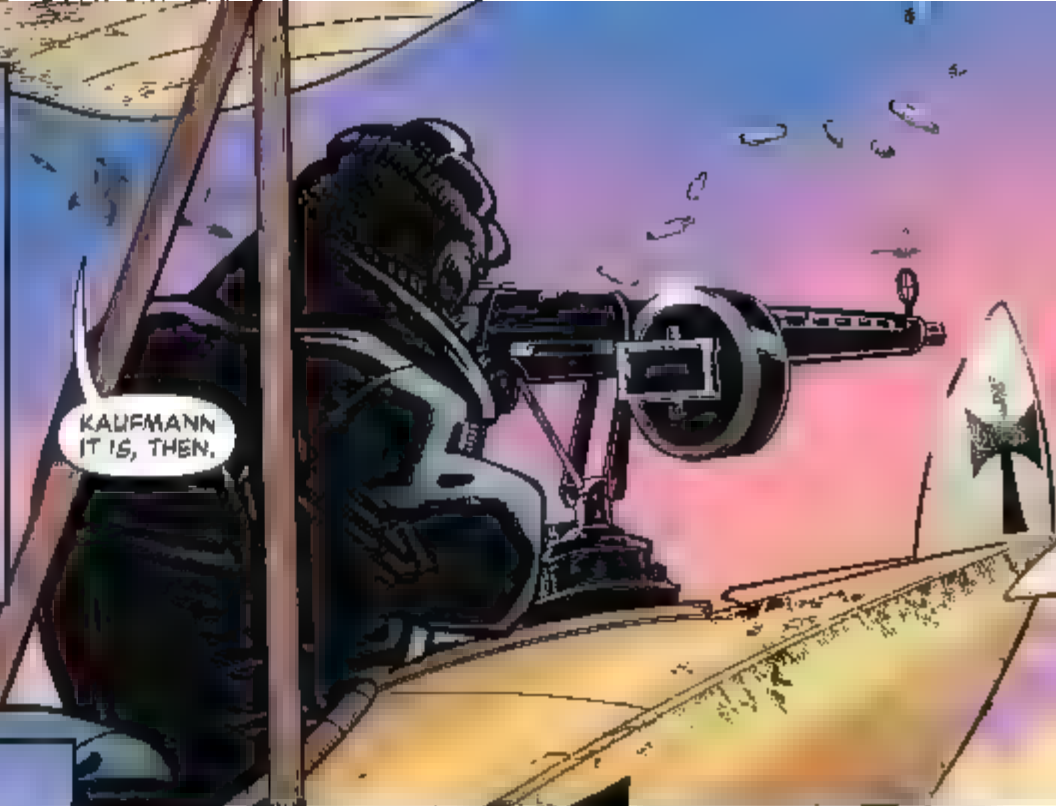
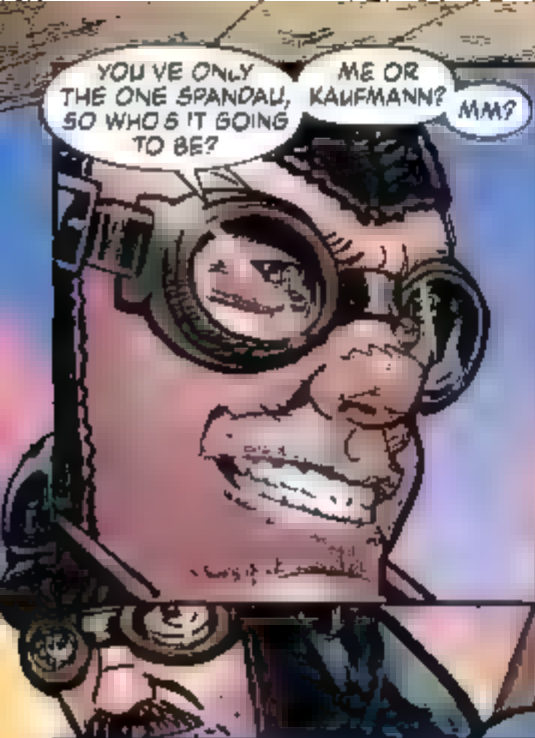


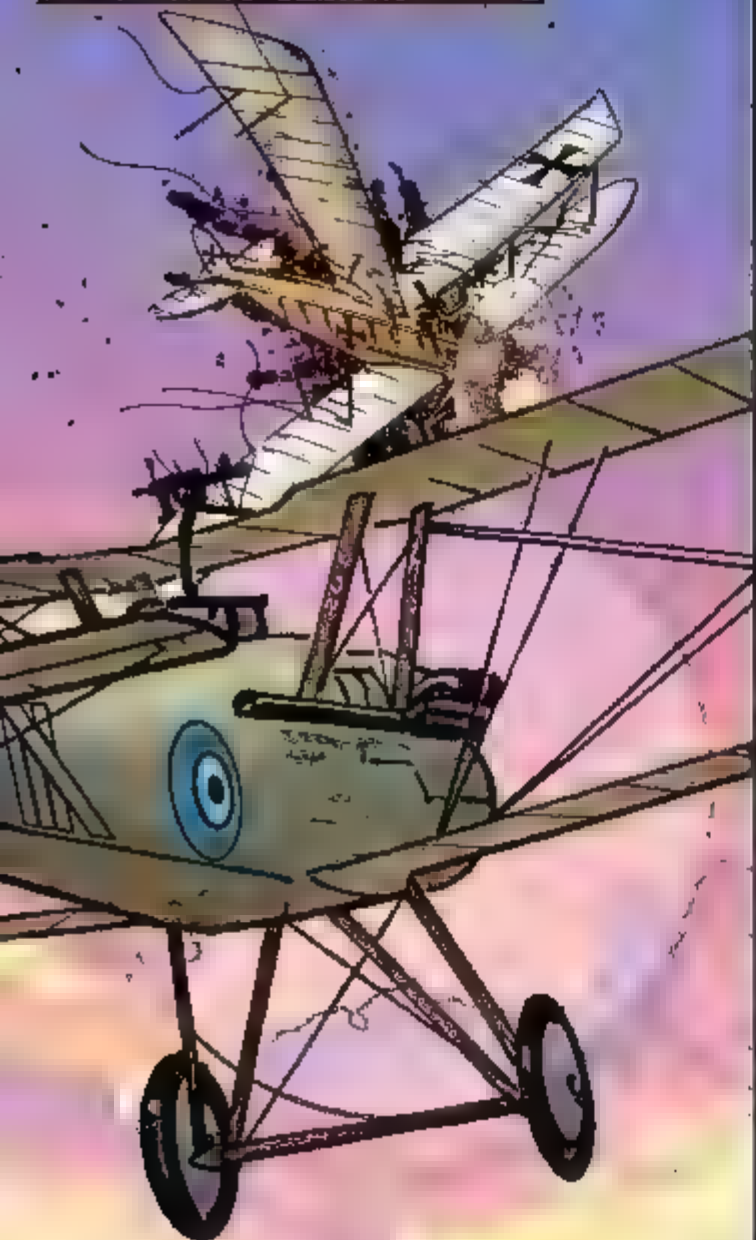
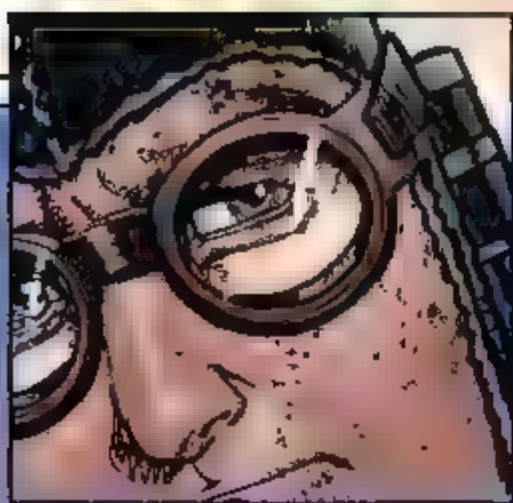
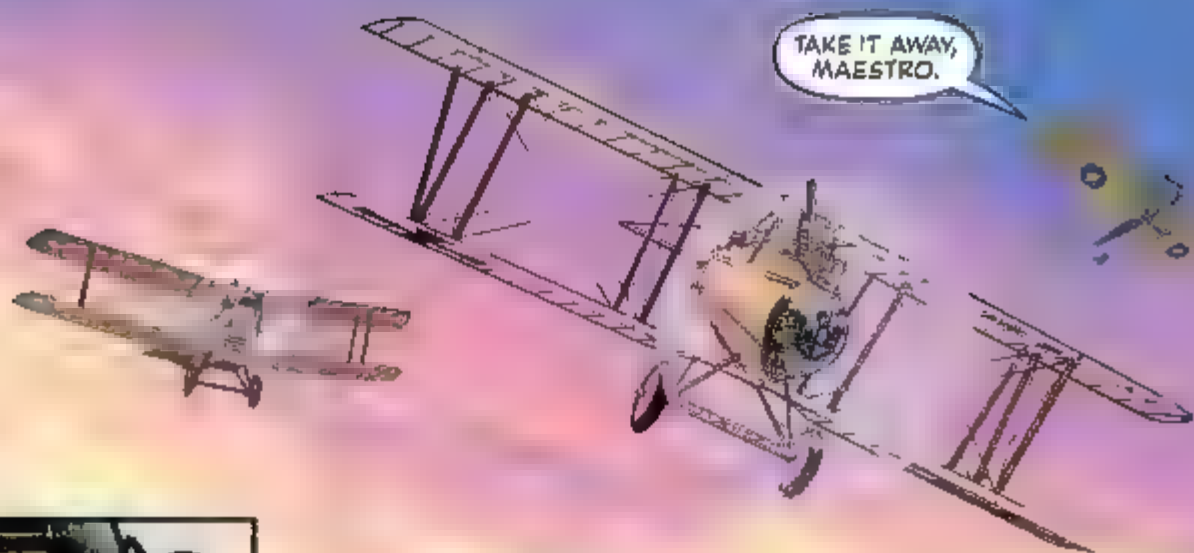


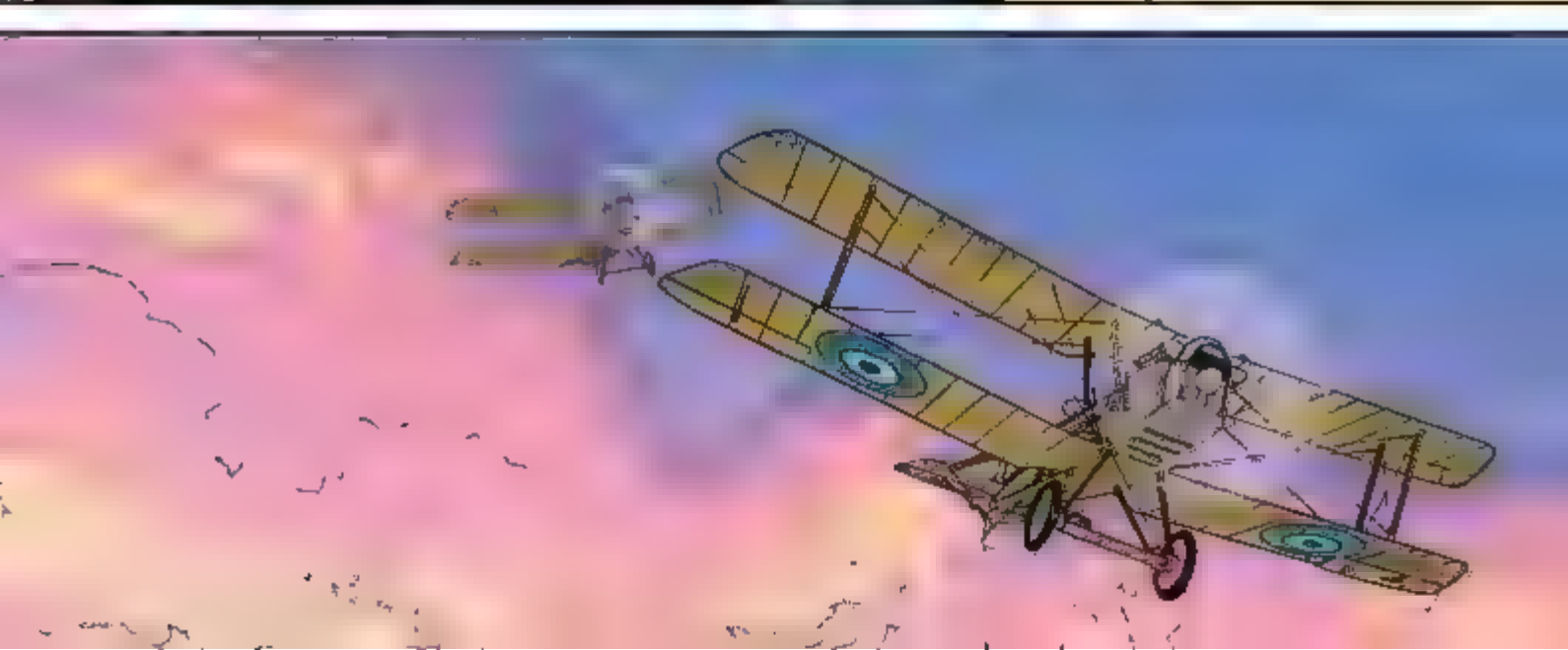
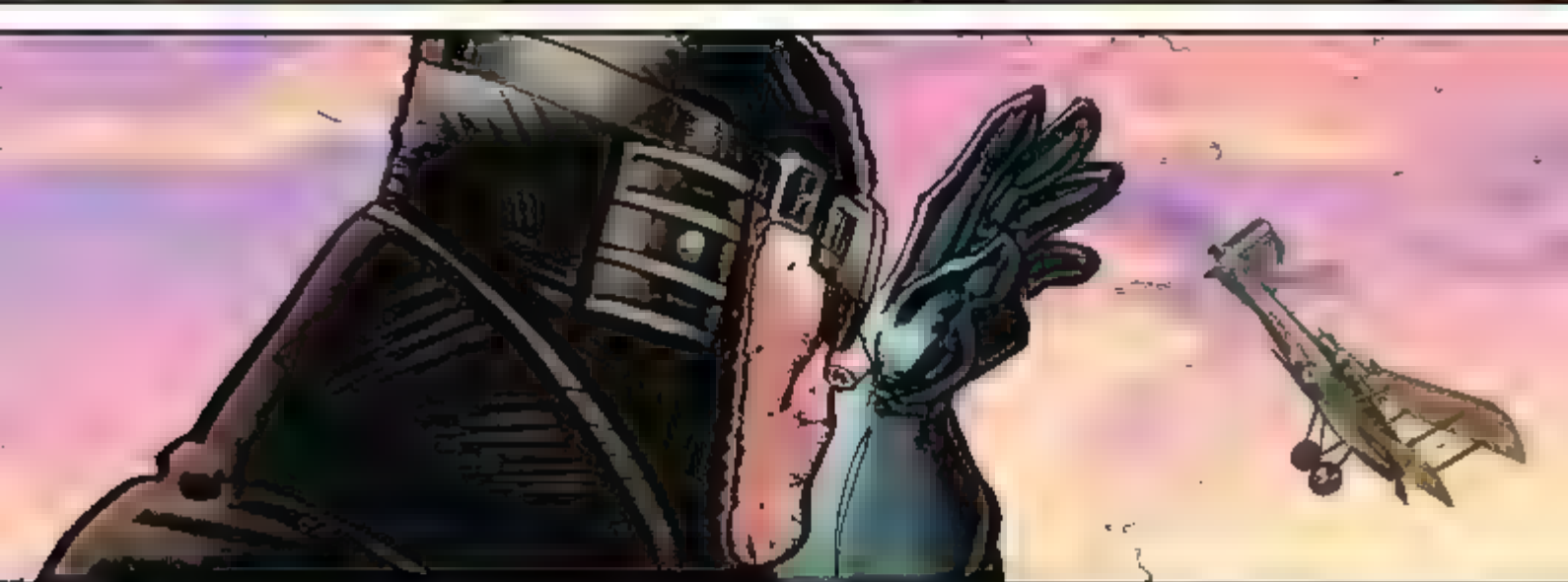
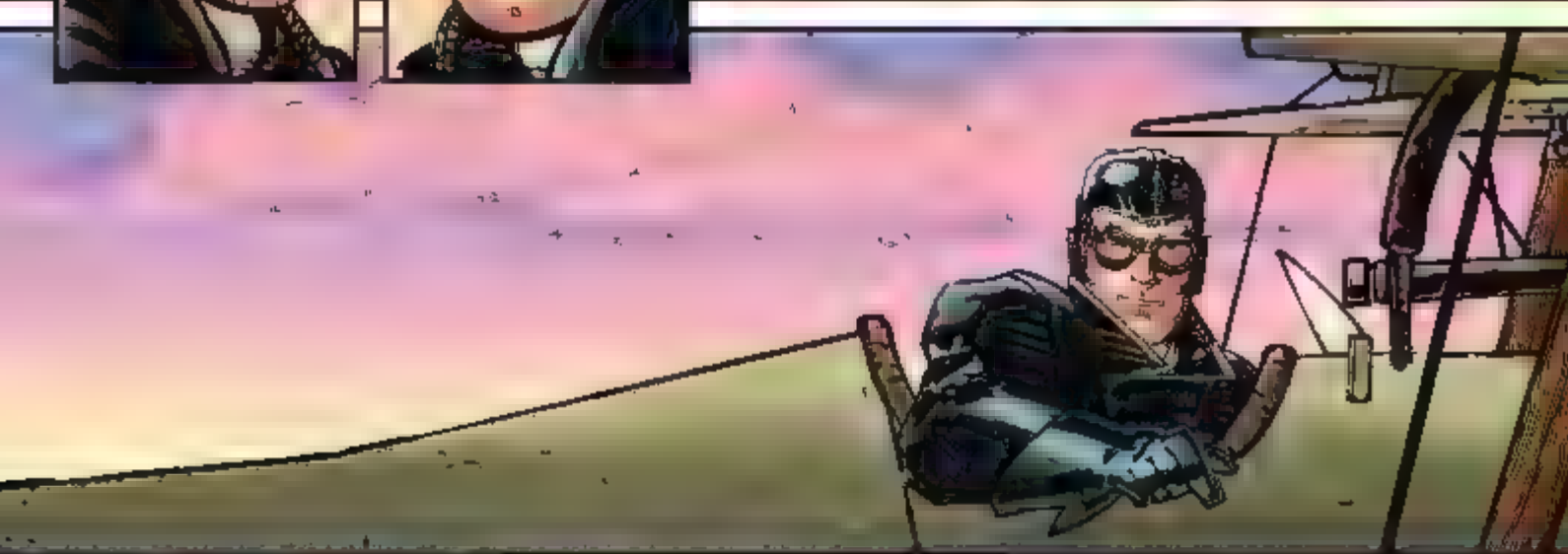
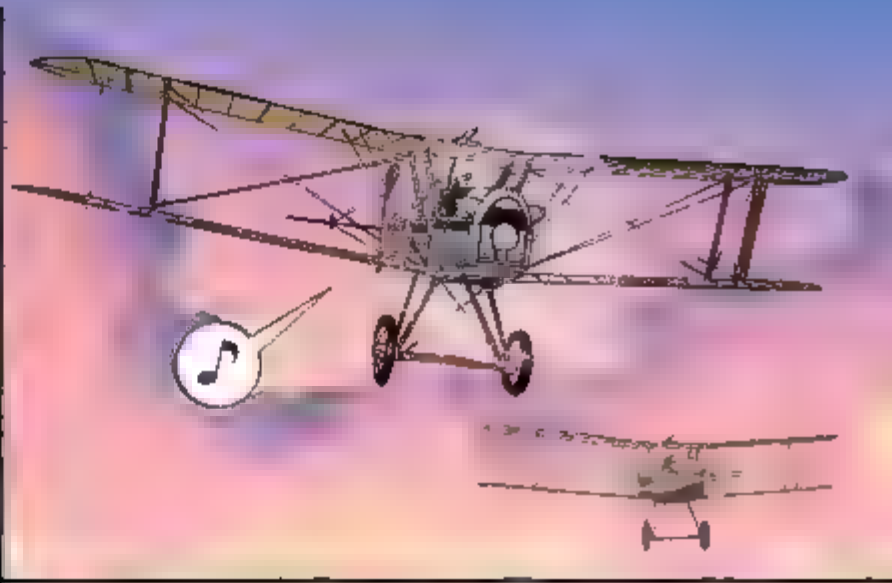
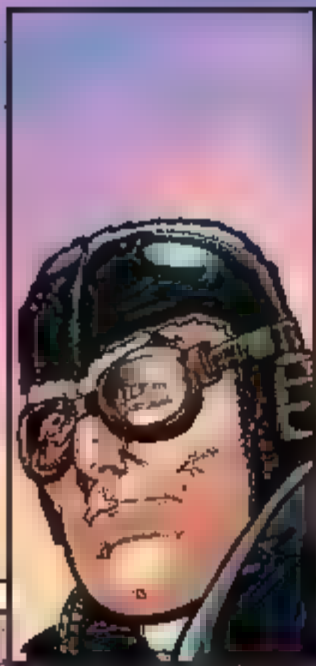
OH, WHAT'S
TO BE DONE, MY POOR
LITTLE HUN?

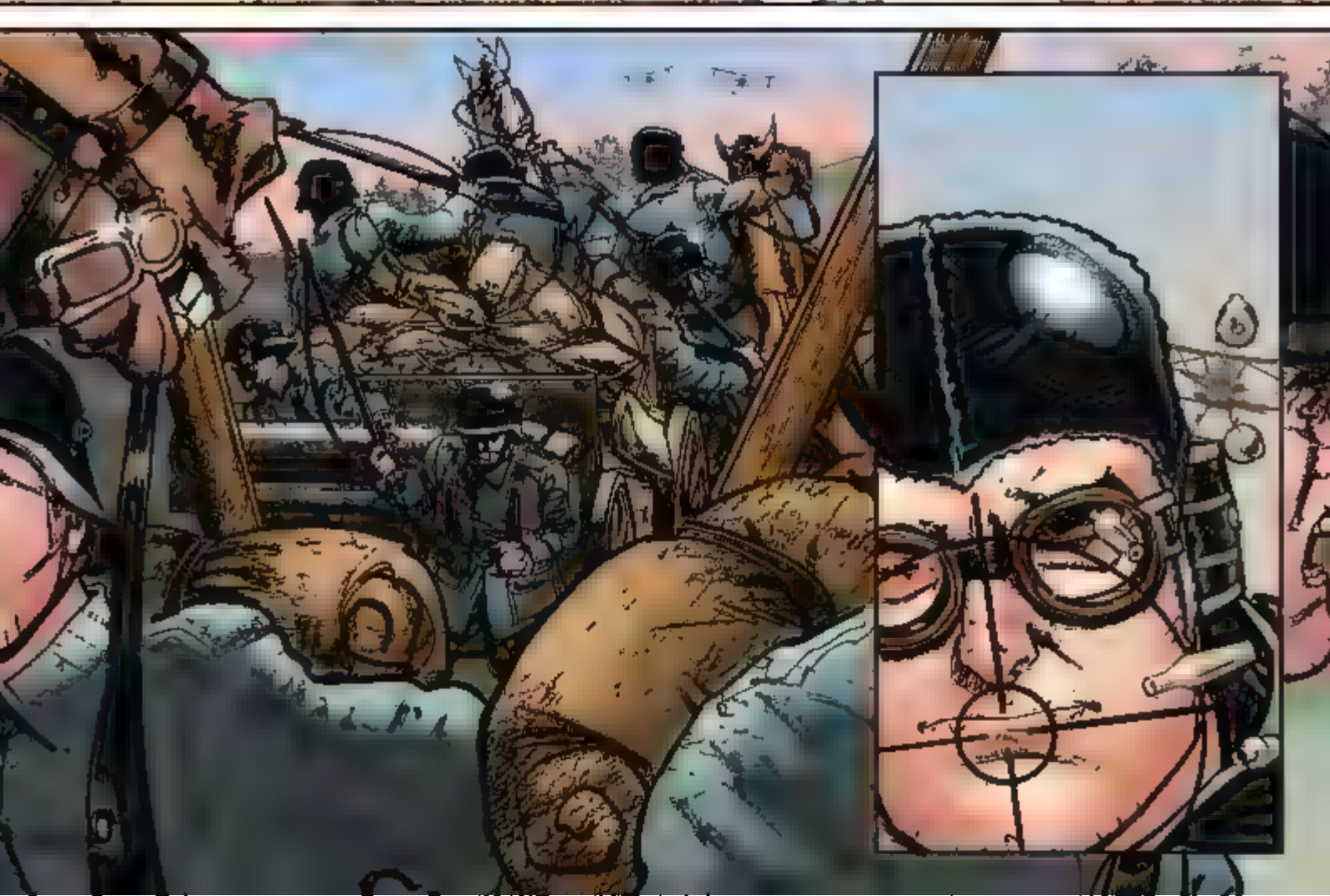
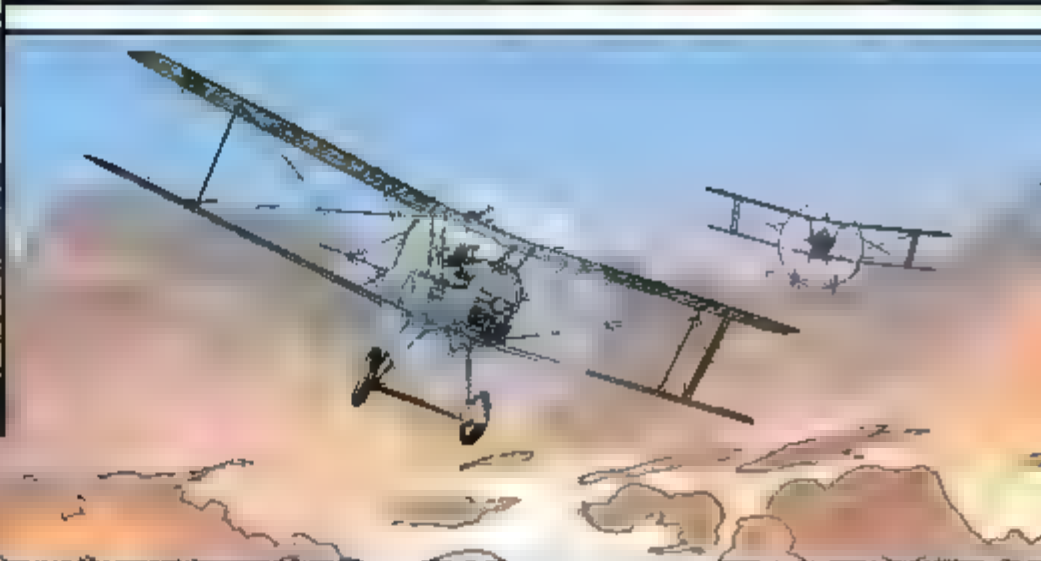
WITH THE
TWO OF US ON
YOUR TAIL?

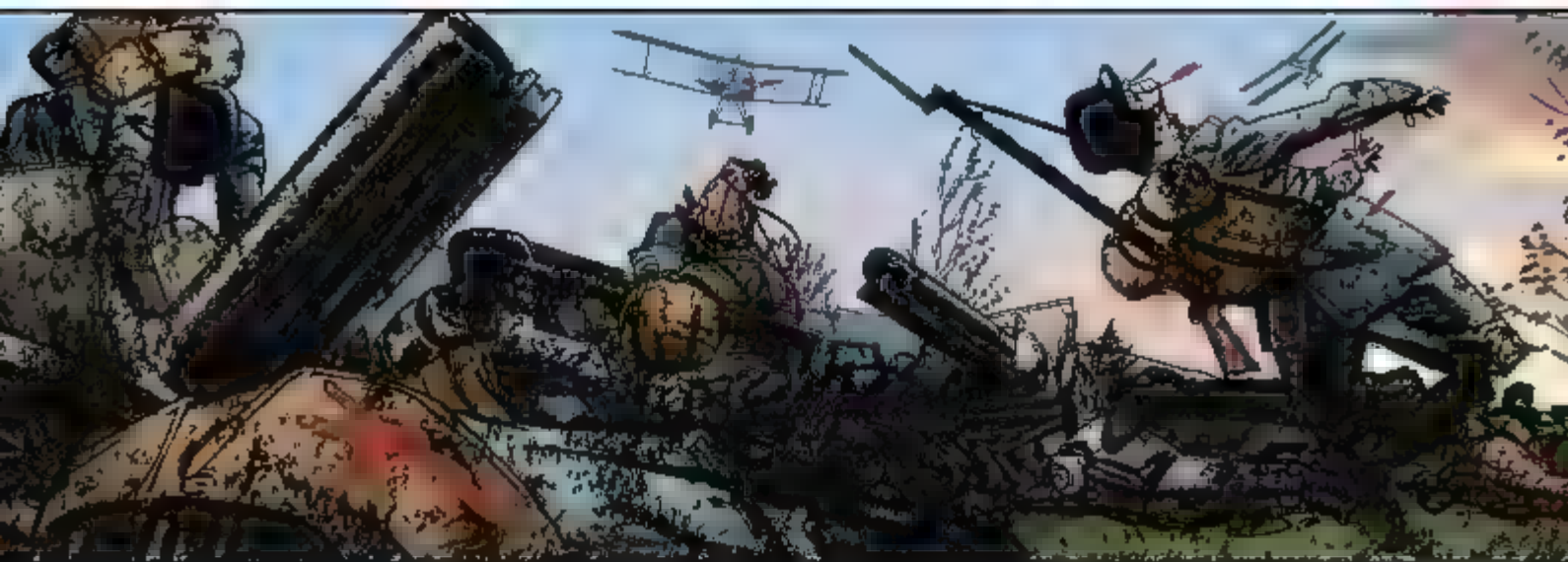
**4: ON
THE
FIRST
DAY OF
JULY**





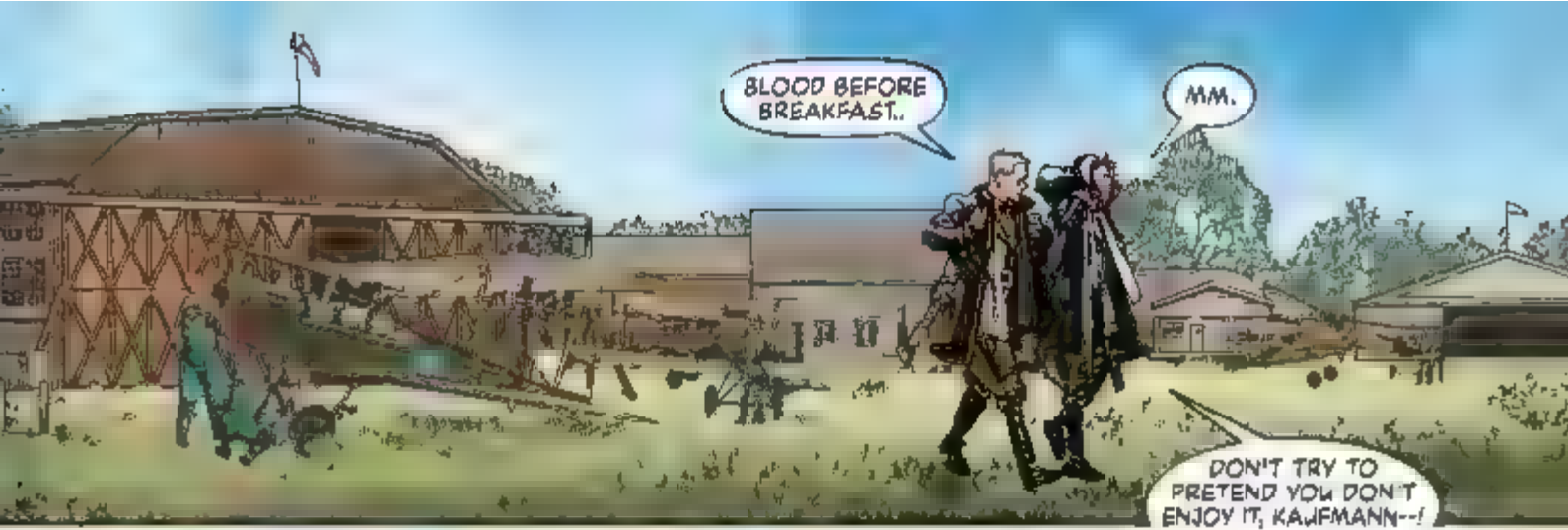






SOMETHING
DIFFERENT EVERY
DAY.





BLOOD BEFORE
BREAKFAST.

MM.

DON'T TRY TO
PRETEND YOU DON'T
ENJOY IT, KAUFMANN--!



T'S A JOB
AND I'M GOOD AT T,
THERE'S NO MORE TO
IT THAN THAT.

MY,
HAVEN'T YOU
COME A LONG
WAY?



YOU RUTHLESS KILLING
MACHINE, YOU. I BET YOU
DON'T EVEN SPEW ANYMORE,
AFTER YOU'VE POTTED
A HUN.

MOSTLY THANKS
TO THE S.E.S. IF WE'D
STUCK WITH THE PUP I'D
HAVE LOST AT LEAST
HALF OF THOSE
SCRAPS.

HOW MANY
IS IT NOW, A
DOZEN?



THE OLD PUP WAS
GOOD FOR PROMOTION,
THOUGH IF ALEC WRIGHT
HADN'T GONE WEST, YOU
WOULDN'T HAVE GOTTEN
C-FLIGHT

GOOD GOD,
THOSE MECHANICS
OVER THERE. I
BELIEVE THEY'RE
HAVING A
B.I...

FISS OFF,
BOOKER.



YOU'LL HAVE TO INVESTIGATE. CAN'T HAVE THAT SORT OF THING GOING ON AMONG THE ENLISTED MEN.

PISS OFF.

OH, I DO HOPE YOU'RE NOT EXPECTING MERCY FROM ME, ARE YOU?



IT'S THANKS TO YOU I'M NOW KNOWN FROM ONE END OF THIS BASE TO THE OTHER AS *MONTANA*...

HAD A FEELING THAT WOULD CATCH ON.



IT MAKES ME SOUND LIKE SOME SORT OF DRAWLING COW-PUNCHER.

IT'S A FINE NAME AND A FINE STATE. IT'S YOUR STATE.

IF YOU'RE GOING TO KEEP ON DENYING YOUR AMERICAN HERITAGE, IT'S UP TO ME TO SET THINGS RIGHT.



WONDERFUL. THEN I CAN BE JUST LIKE YOU.

I'LL GIVE YOU FIFTY FRANCS IF YOU'LL START SAYING "GOD DAMMIT".



HHHH.

I THINK I LIKED YOU BETTER WHEN YOU WERE STUPID.



WHAT-
HO...

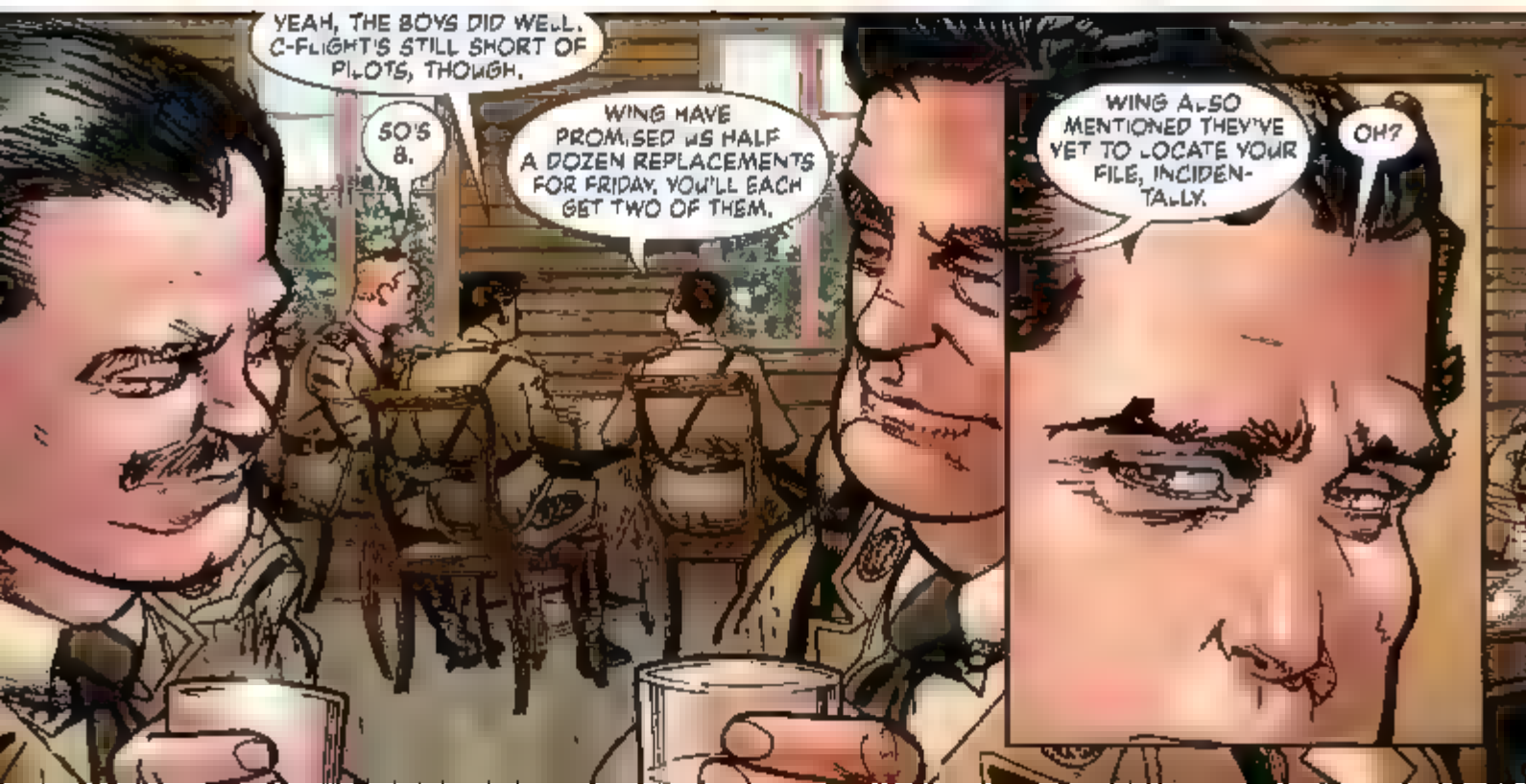
EVENING,
MAJOR. YOU'RE
JUST IN TIME TO SEE
BOOKER LOSE HIS THIRD
STRAIGHT GAME OF
CHECKERS.

HE MEANS
DRAUGHTS,
ROX.



I MEAN
CHECKERS

WELL, TOMAHTO-
TOMAYTO. THAT WAS A
DAMN GOOD SHOW THIS
AFTERNOON, CAPTAIN,
TWO ALBATR FOR NONE
OF OUR OWN.



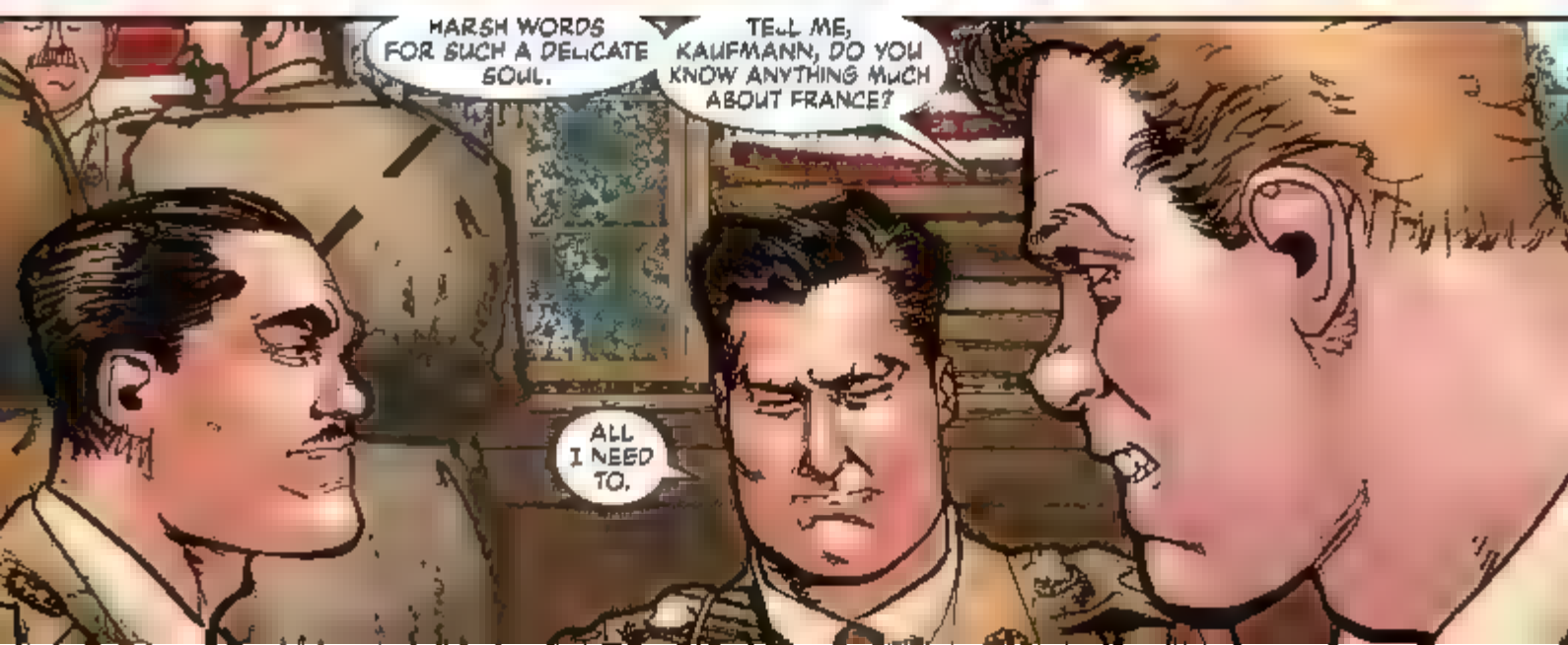
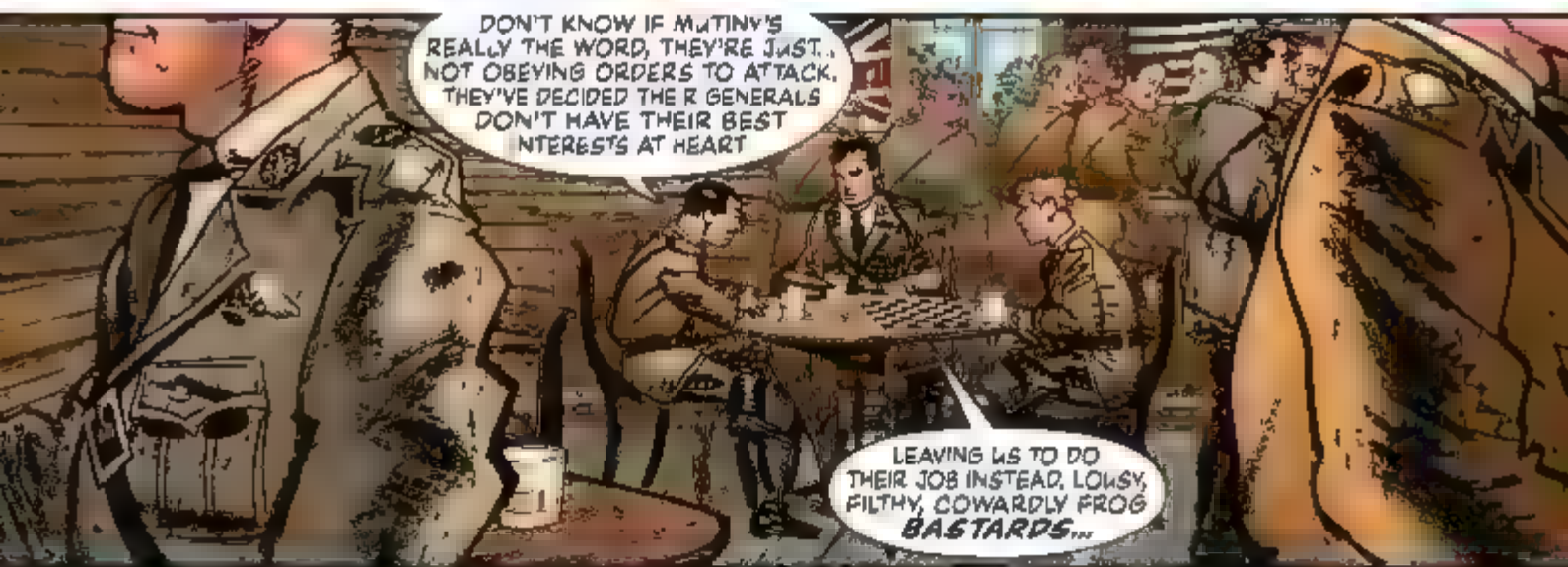
YEAH, THE BOYS DID WELL.
C-FLIGHT'S STILL SHORT OF
PILOTS, THOUGH.

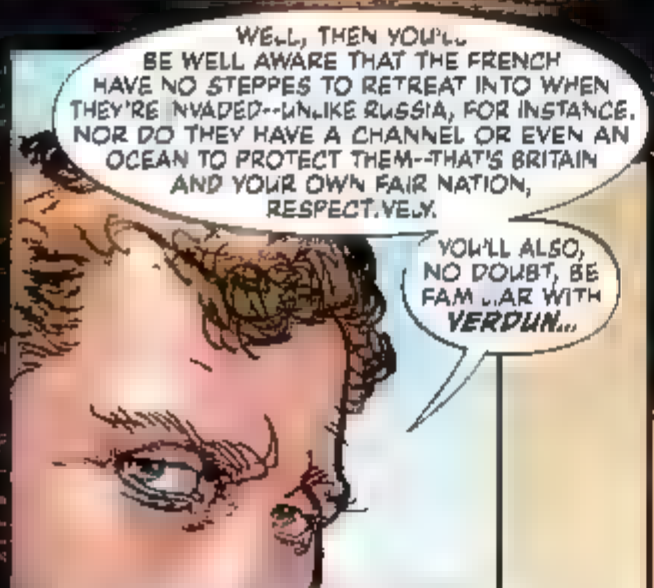
SO'S
8.

WING HAVE
PROMISED US HALF
A DOZEN REPLACEMENTS
FOR FRIDAY, YOU'LL EACH
GET TWO OF THEM.

WING ALSO
MENTIONED THEY'VE
YET TO LOCATE YOUR
FILE, INCIDENT-
TALLY.

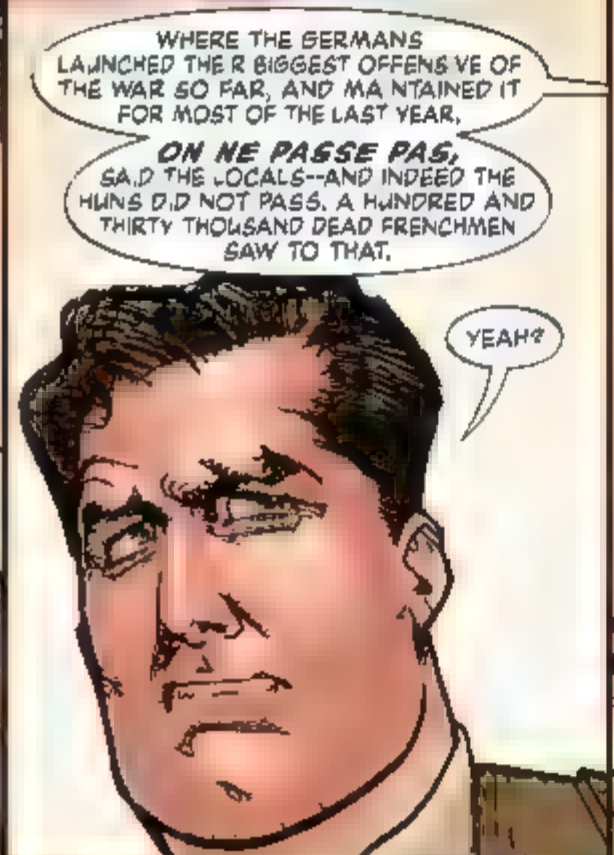
OH?





WELL, THEN YOU'LL BE WELL AWARE THAT THE FRENCH HAVE NO STEPPES TO RETREAT INTO WHEN THEY'RE INVADED--UNLIKE RUSSIA, FOR INSTANCE. NOR DO THEY HAVE A CHANNEL OR EVEN AN OCEAN TO PROTECT THEM--THAT'S BRITAIN AND YOUR OWN FAIR NATION, RESPECT.VELY.

YOU'LL ALSO, NO DOUBT, BE FAMILIAR WITH VERDUN...



WHERE THE GERMANS LAUNCHED THE BIGGEST OFFENSIVE OF THE WAR SO FAR, AND MAINTAINED IT FOR MOST OF THE LAST YEAR.

ON NE PASSE PAS, SAID THE LOCALS--AND INDEED THE HUNS DID NOT PASS. A HUNDRED AND THIRTY THOUSAND DEAD FRENCHMEN SAW TO THAT.

YEAH?

"YEAH"

IF YOU'RE GOING TO POKE YOUR NOSE INTO THE REST OF THE WORLD, IT NEVER HURTS TO KNOW WHAT THE HELL YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT.

COULD YOU BE JUST A FRACTION MORE PATRONIZING, OR DO YOU THINK YOU'VE REACHED YOUR LIMIT?

OH, I THINK WE BOTH KNOW I CAN GO A BIT FURTHER YET.



ANYWAY, THERE'S NO EXCUSE FOR MURDER, OR WHATEVER YOU WANT TO CALL IT. NONE AT ALL.

QUITE RIGHT, CAPTAIN. LOOK AT THE BRITISH WE FIGHT ON EVEN **AFTER** OUR GENERALS HAVE PROVED THEMSELVES INCOMPETENT.

AH, THANK YOU, BILLY.



HOW
DO YOU
MEAN?

WELL, BEFORE
I TRANSFERRED TO
THE R.F.C., I WAS WITH
THE INFANTRY, THE EAST
SURREYS, AS A MATTER
OF FACT.

AND ABOUT A
YEAR AGO, ON THE FIRST
OF JULY, I TOOK PART IN THE
BATTLE OF THE SOMME.



I DIDN'T
KNOW THAT,
ROX.

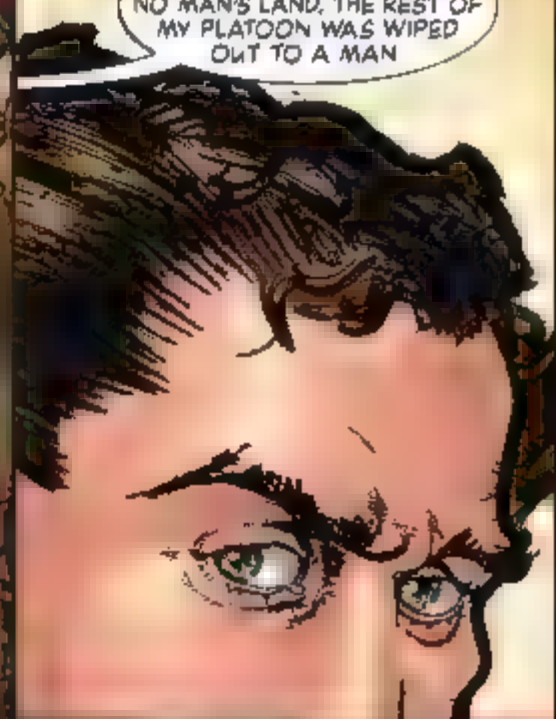
WHAT
HAPPENED?

WE LOST
SIXTY THOUSAND MEN
IN ONE DAY.

THAT'S
KILLED AND
WOUNDED
TOGETHER, OF
COURSE.

IN A NUTSHELL, WE'D BEEN TOLD THAT THE
PRELIMINARY BOMBARDMENT WOULD KILL
THE GERMANS IN THEIR TRENCHES AND
DESTROY THE BARBED WIRE IN FRONT OF
THEM. IT DID NEITHER, BUT WE WERE
ORDERED FORWARD ANYWAY, WAVE
UPON WAVE OF US.

I CAUGHT A
PACKET HALFWAY ACROSS
NO MAN'S LAND. THE REST OF
MY PLATOON WAS WIPED
OUT TO A MAN.



THEY WERE GOOD LADS
SOME OF THEM WERE KICKING
FOOTBALLS, IF YOU CAN
BELIEVE THAT.

I FELT RATHER
A CAD FOR NOT GETTING
KILLED MYSELF.





JESUS.



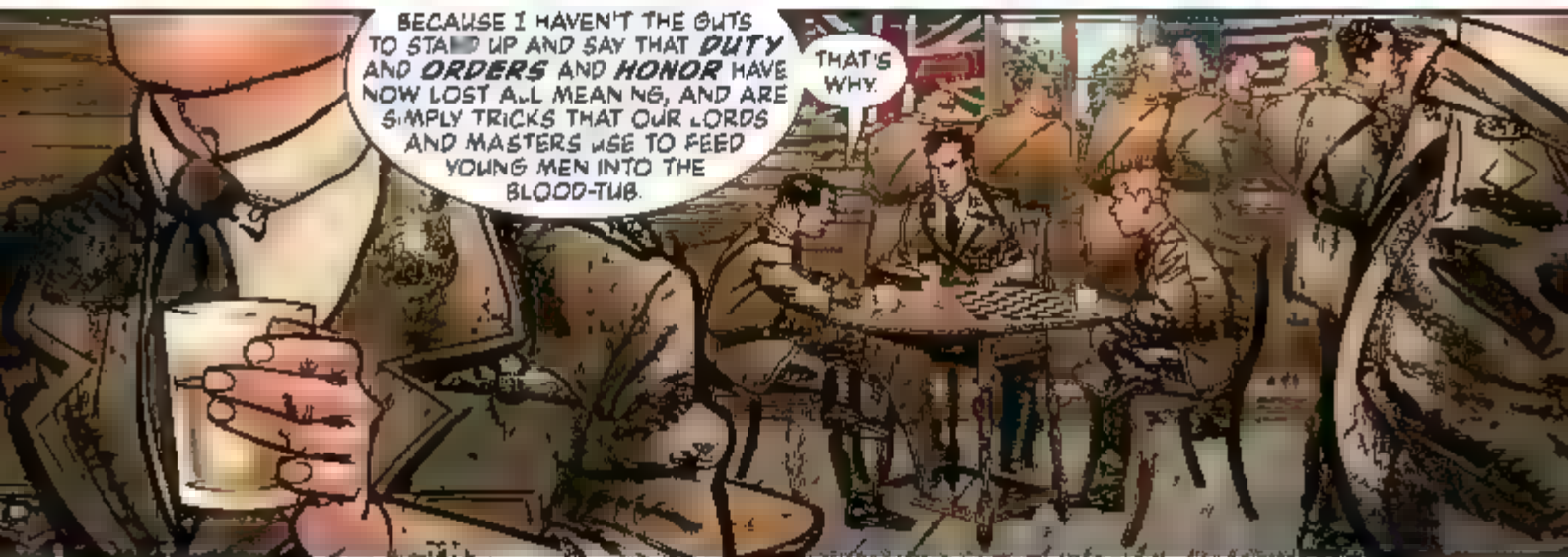
I GUESS AT LEAST YOU KNOW THEY'LL MAKE SURE IT NEVER HAPPENS AGAIN.

OH, ON THE CONTRARY, IT HAPPENED RIGHT THROUGHOUT THAT SUMMER, AND ON SEVERAL MORE OCCASIONS TO DATE. AND I'LL CONTINUE TO HAPPEN, TOO, BECAUSE HIGH COMMAND CAN'T COME UP WITH ANYTHING MORE ORIGINAL.



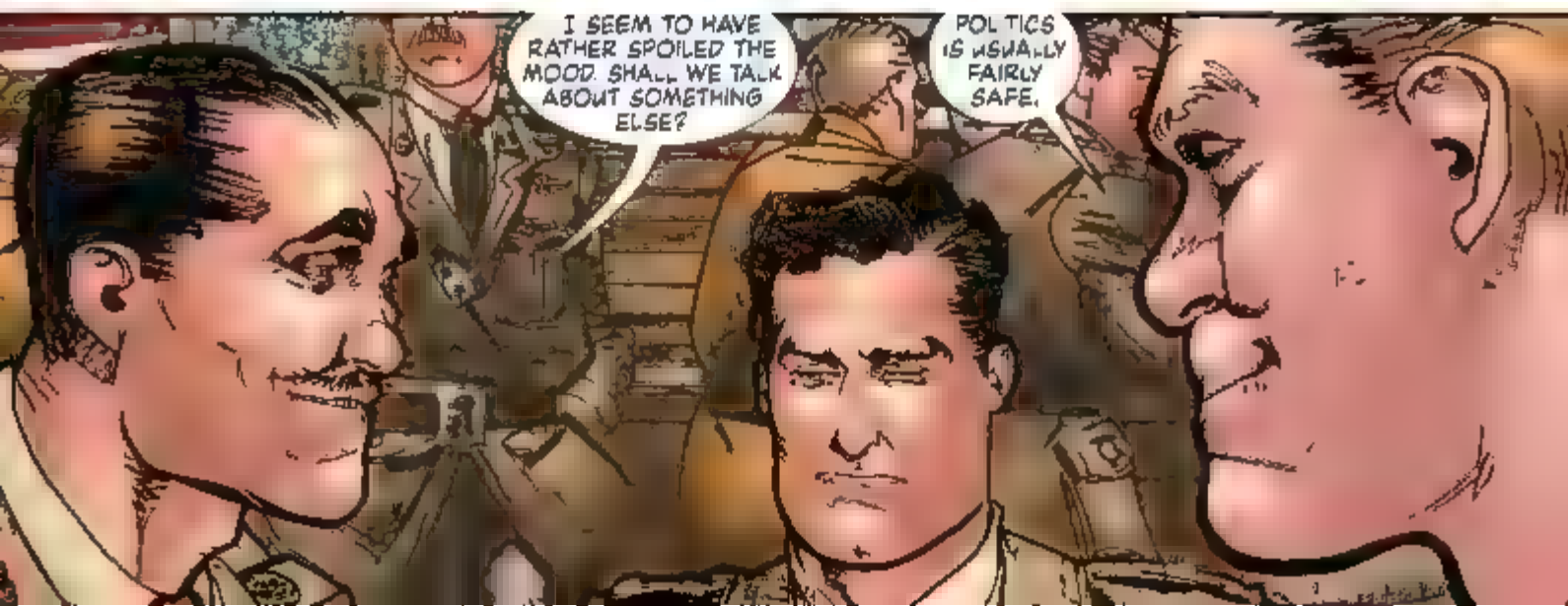
IF THAT'S THE WAY YOU FEEL, WHY DO YOU EVEN CARRY ON.?

BECAUSE I'M A COWARD.



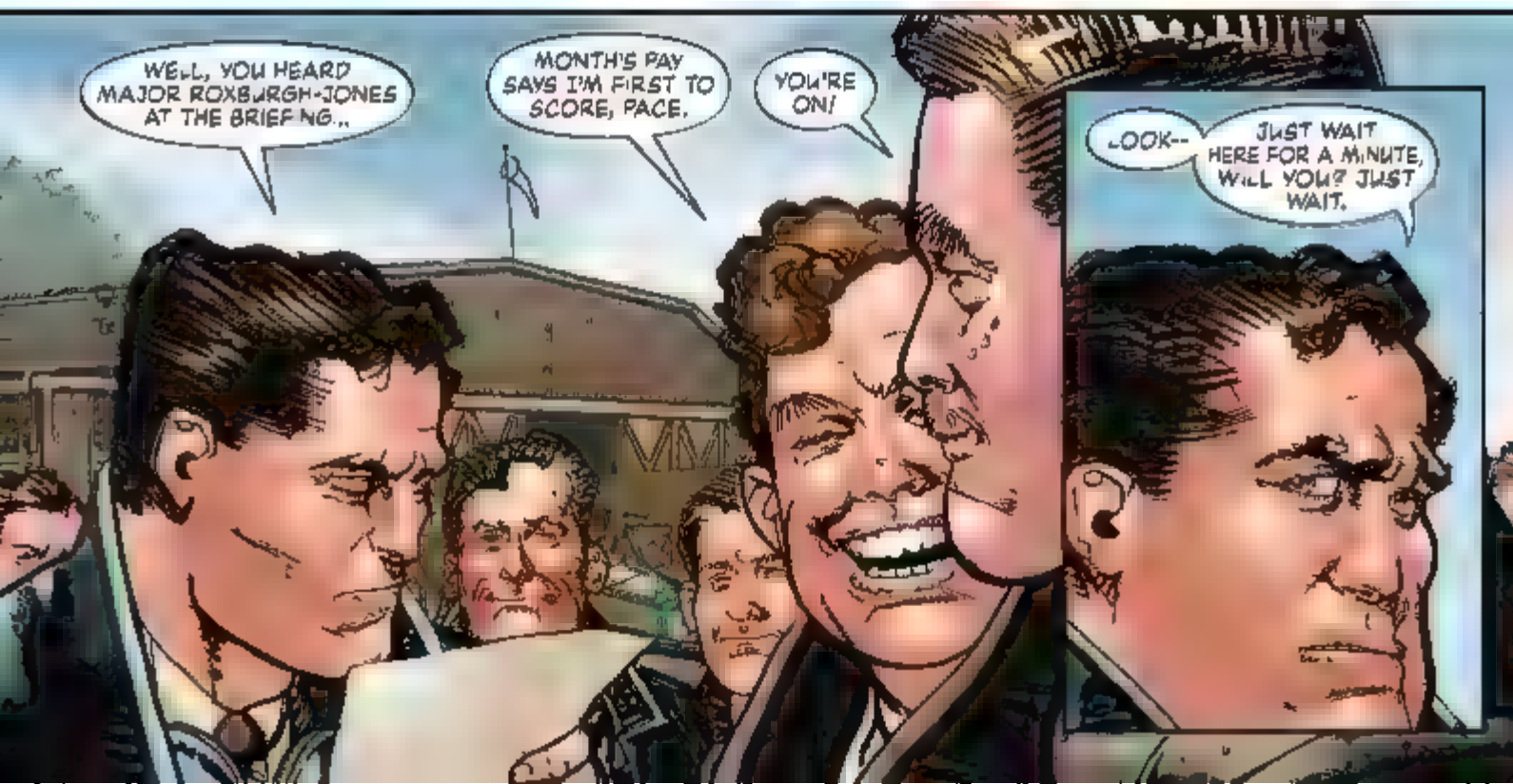
BECAUSE I HAVEN'T THE GUTS TO STAND UP AND SAY THAT **DUTY** AND **ORDERS** AND **HONOR** HAVE NOW LOST ALL MEANING, AND ARE SIMPLY TRICKS THAT OUR LORDS AND MASTERS USE TO FEED YOUNG MEN INTO THE BLOOD-TUB.

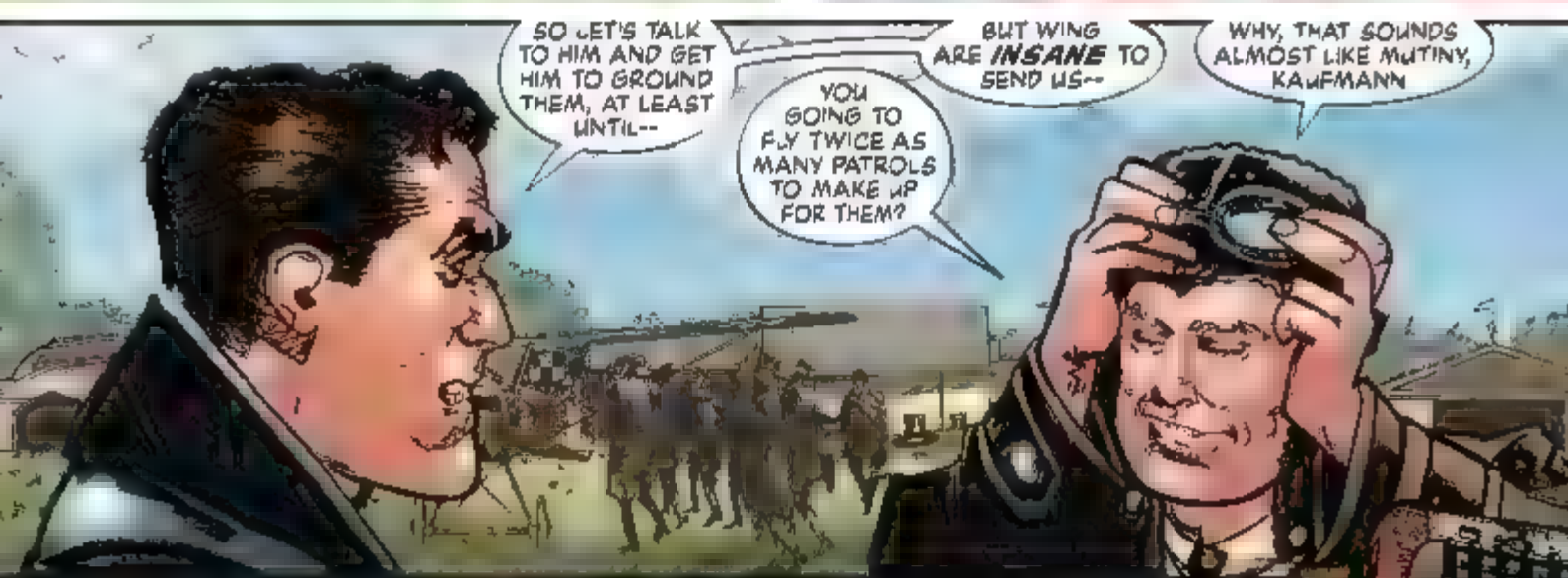
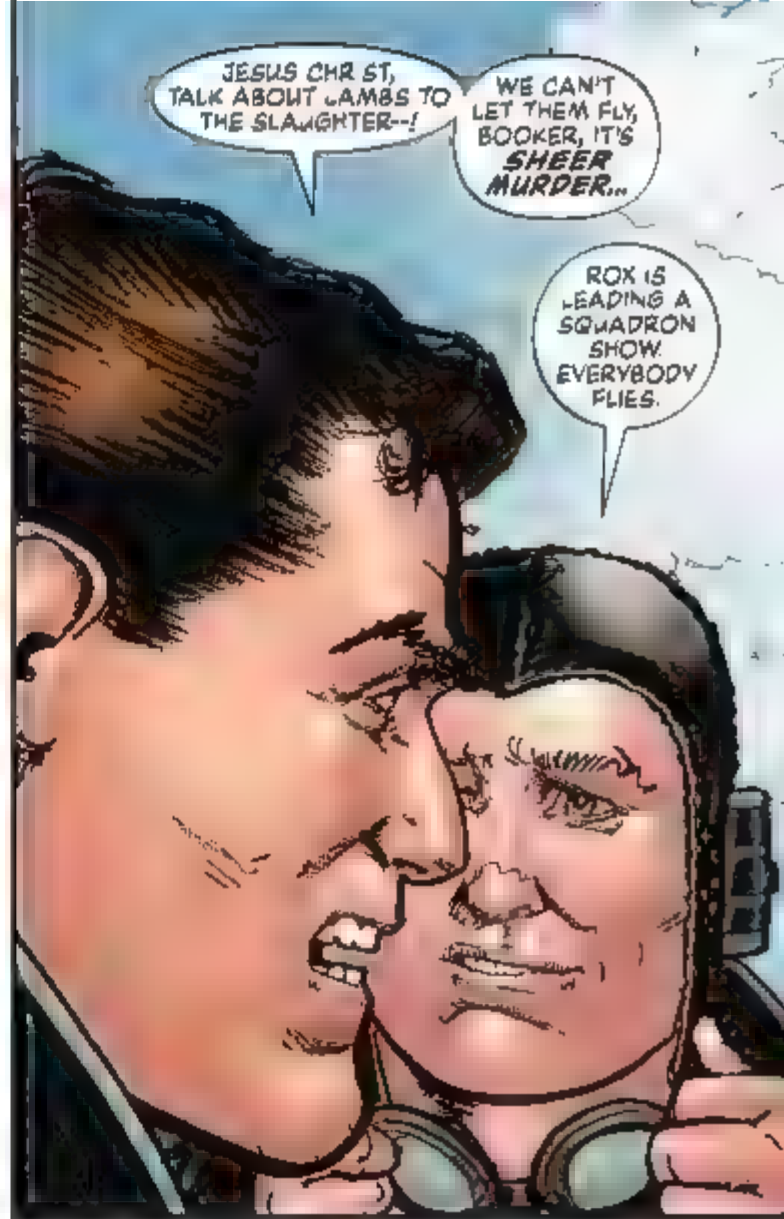
THAT'S WHY.



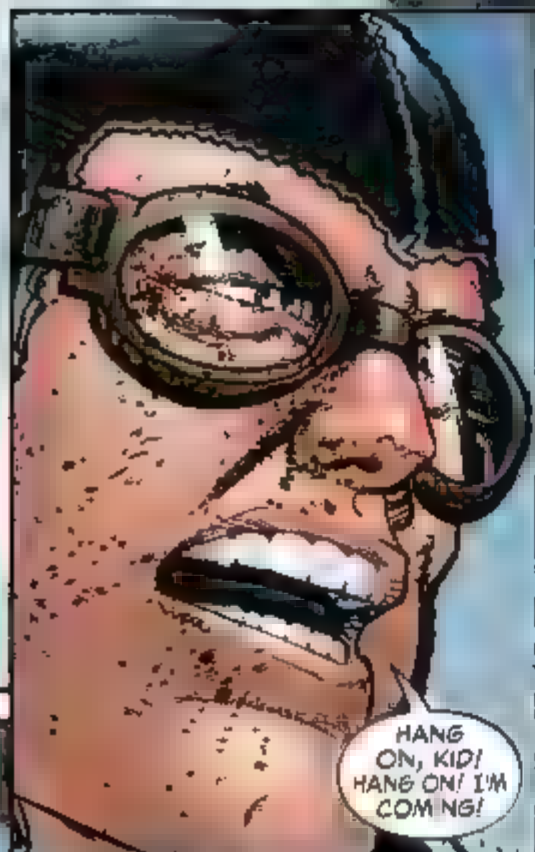
I SEEM TO HAVE RATHER SPOILED THE MOOD. SHALL WE TALK ABOUT SOMETHING ELSE?

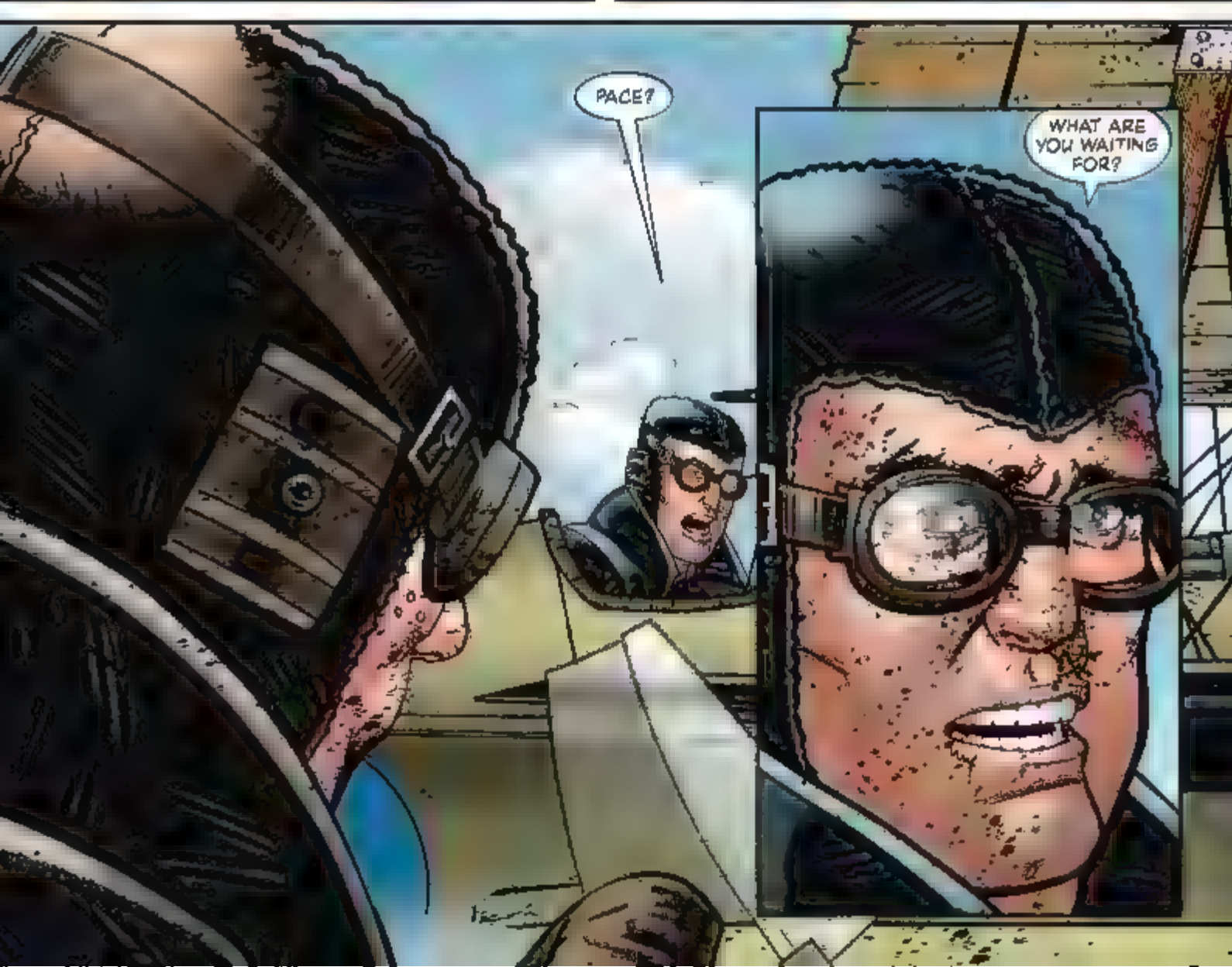
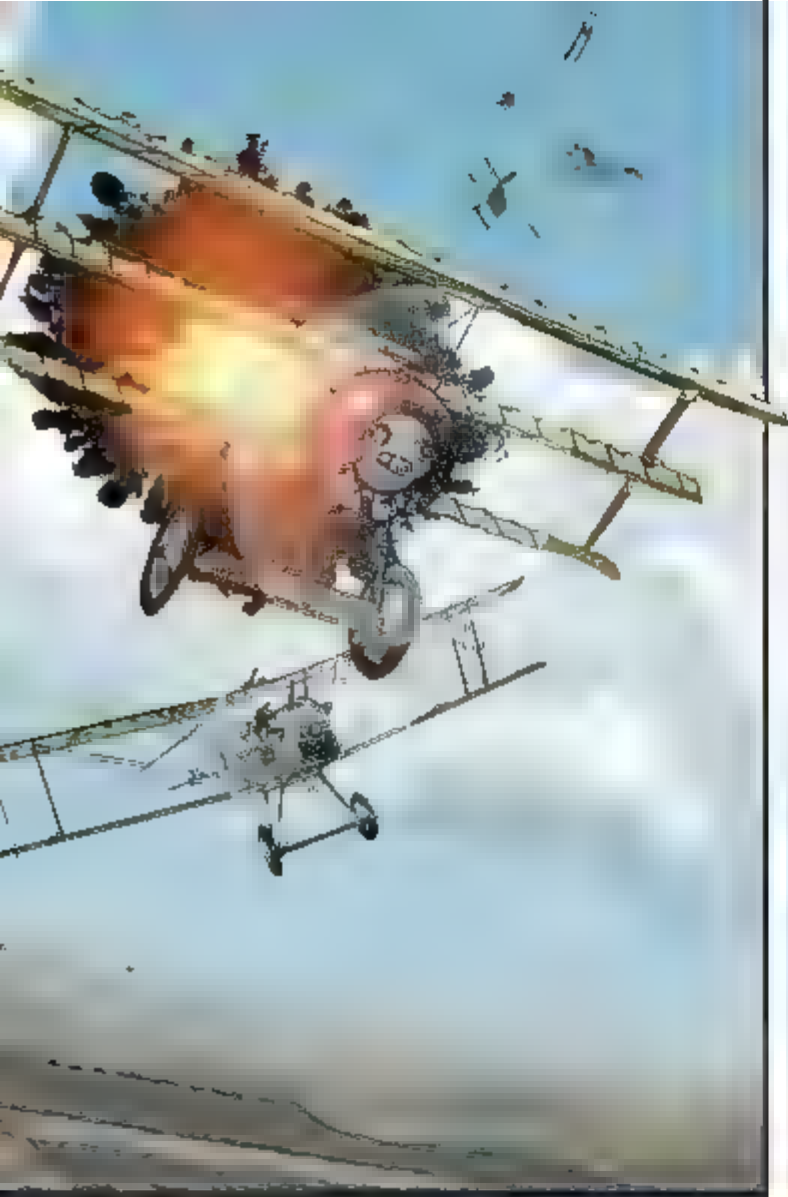
POLITICS IS USUALLY FAIRLY SAFE.

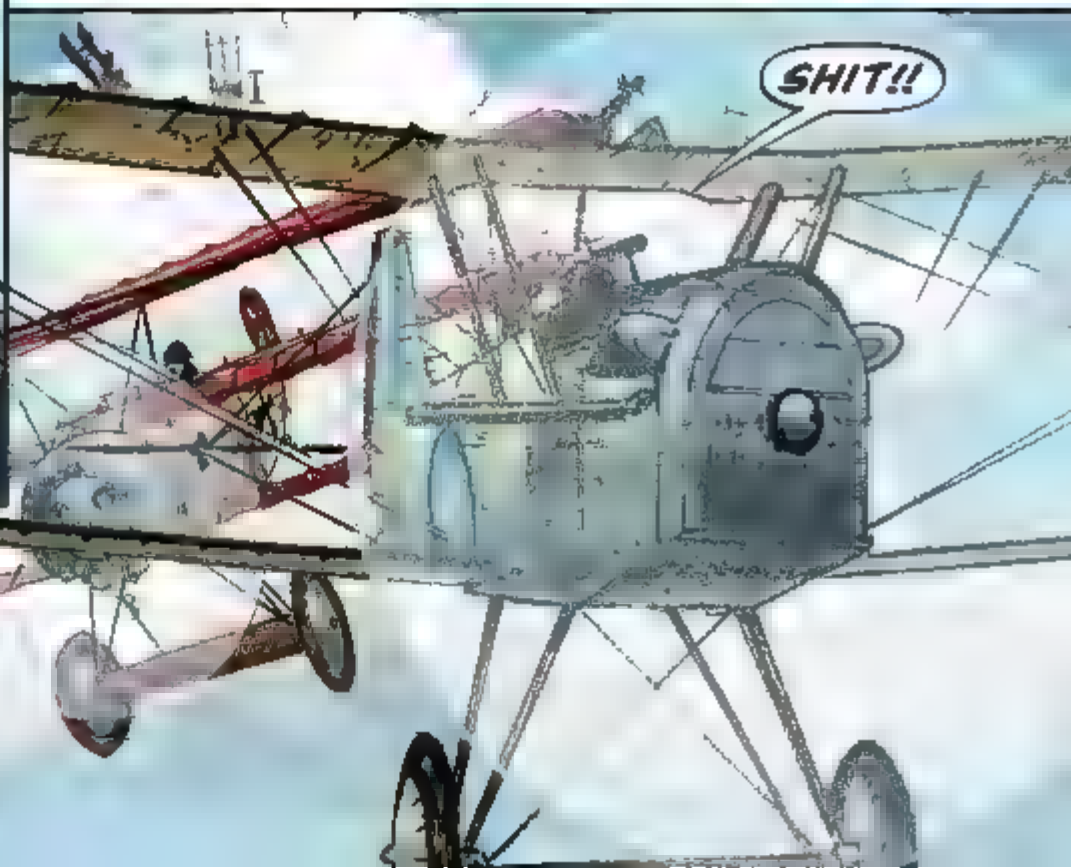
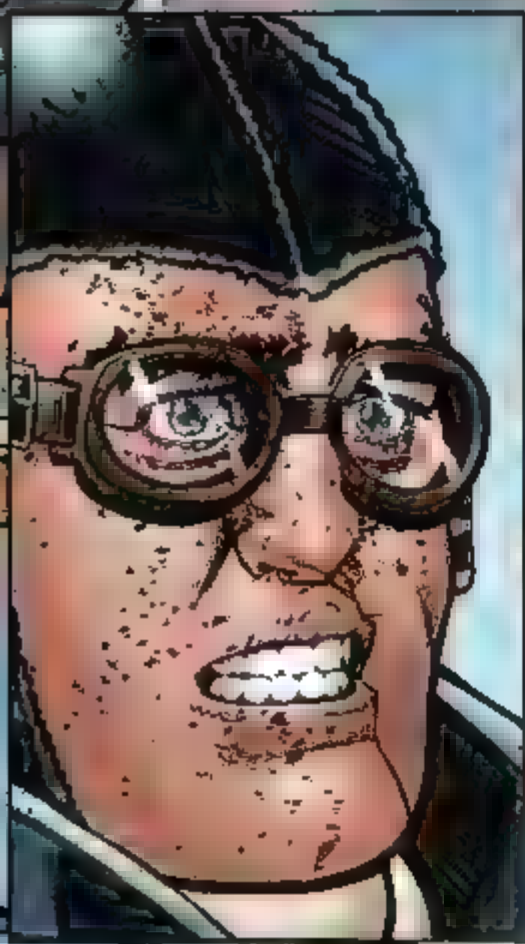


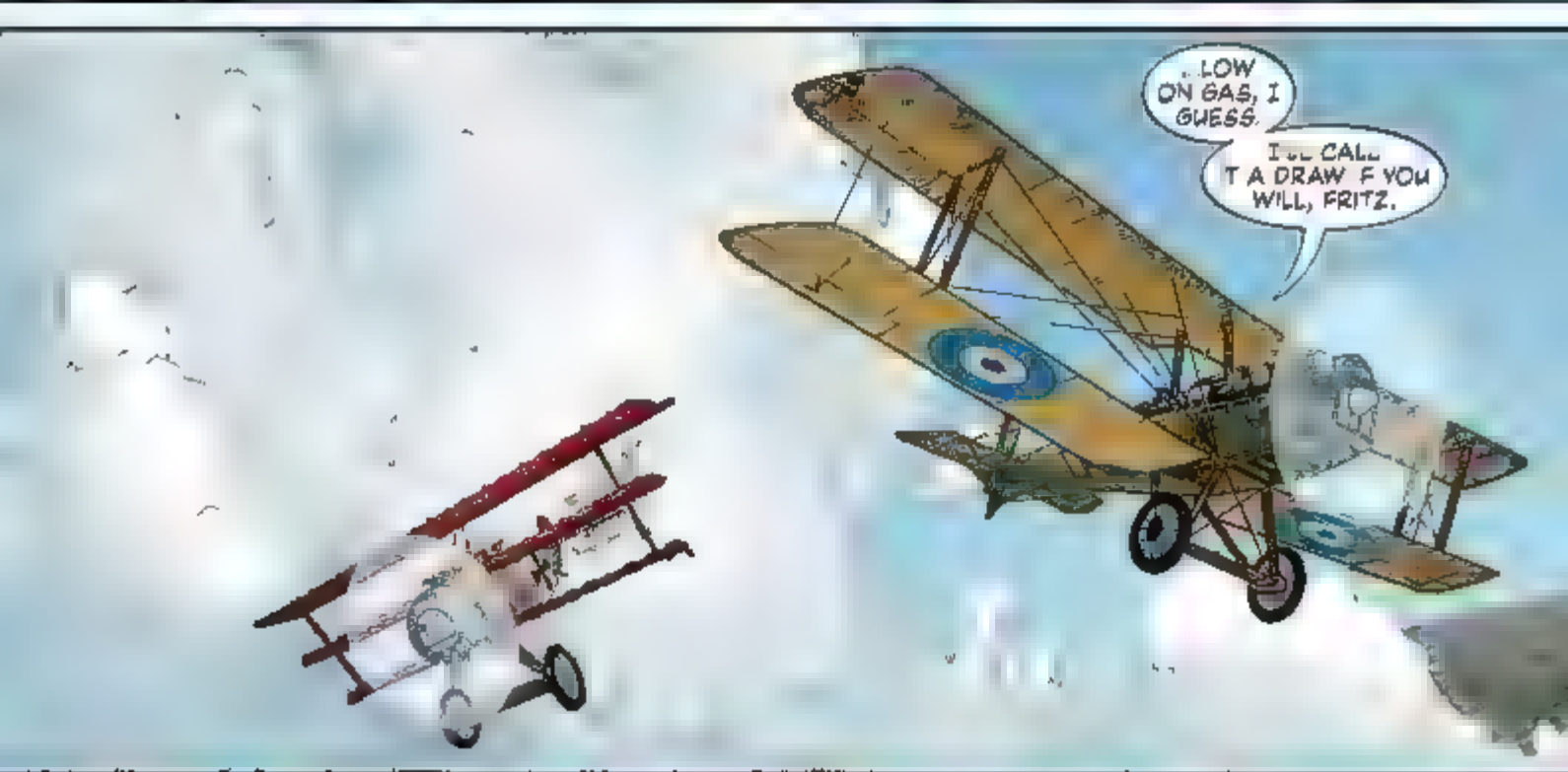


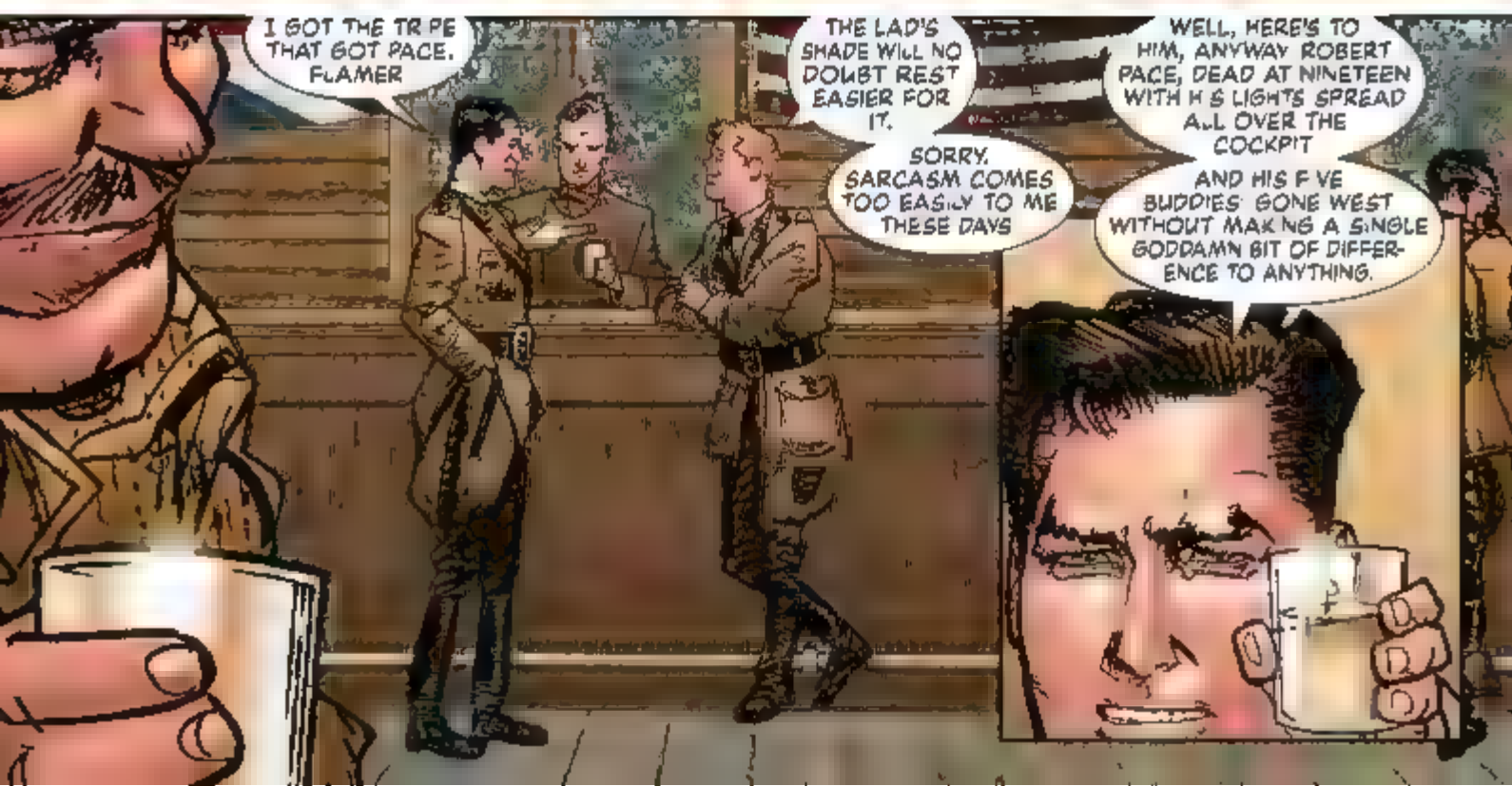
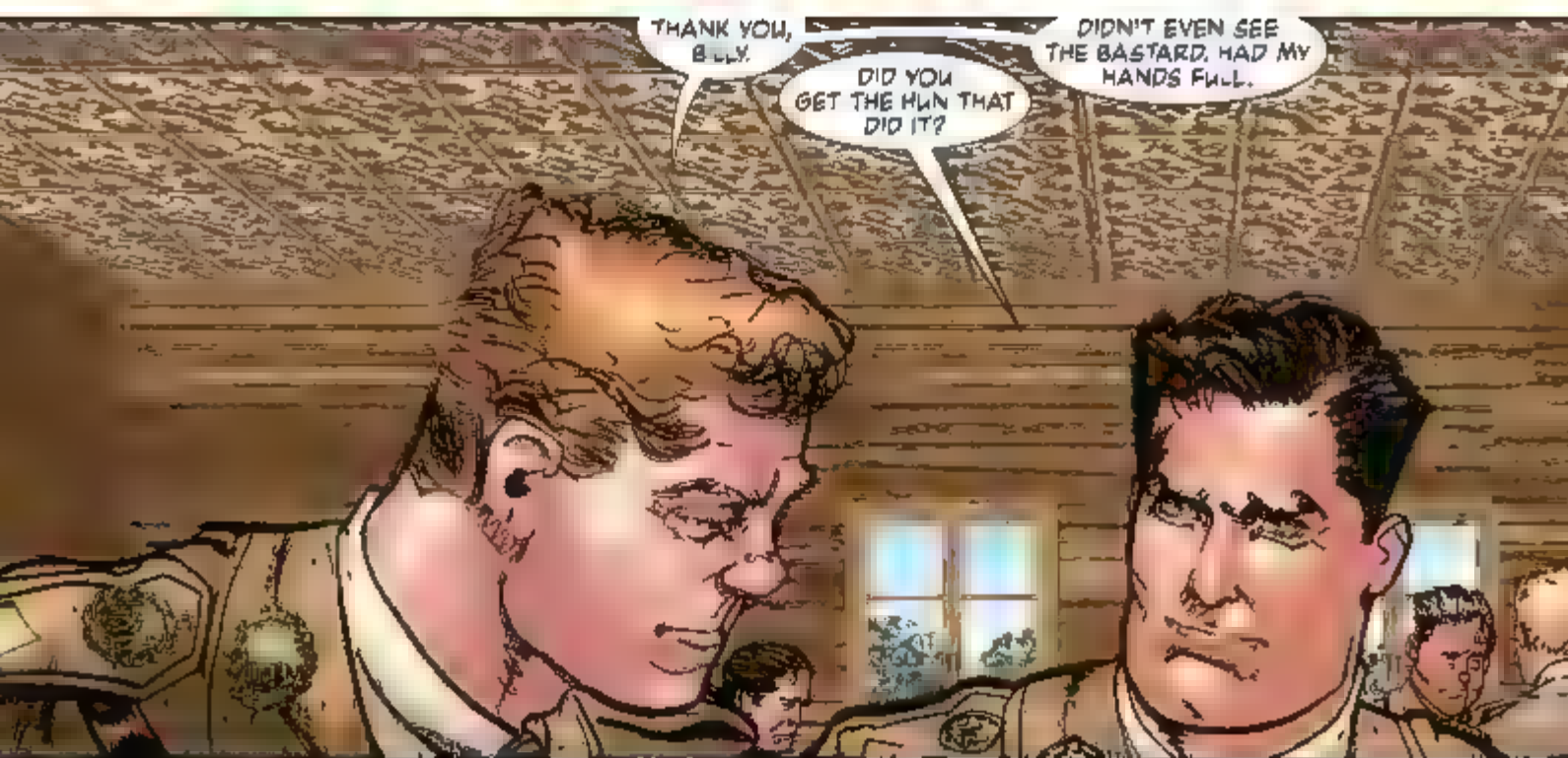


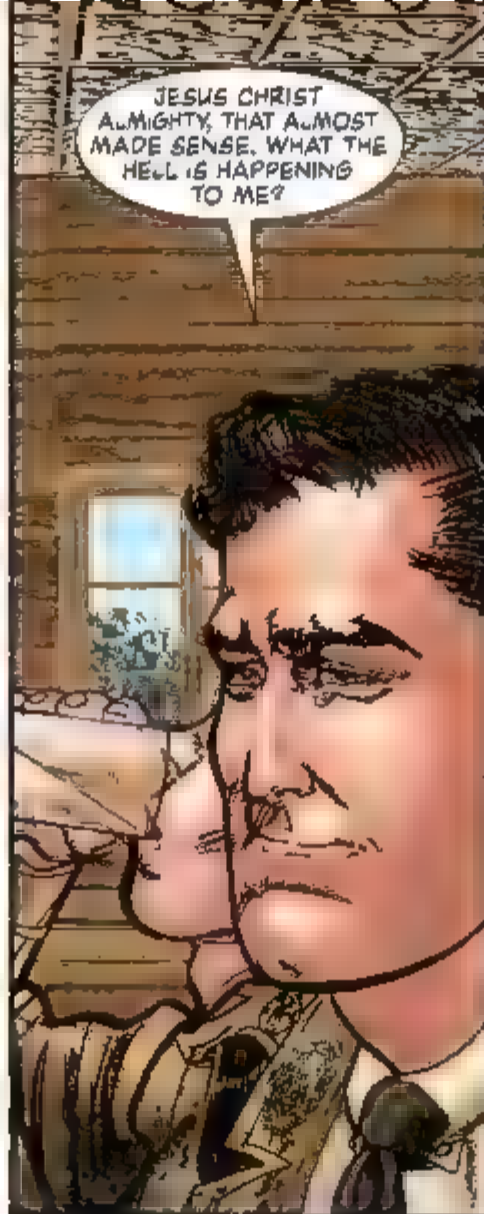
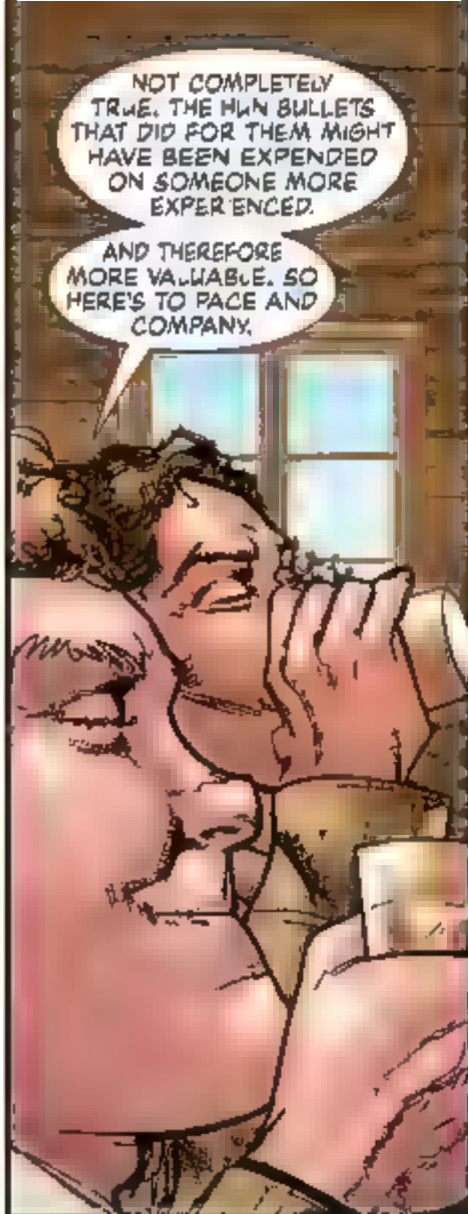












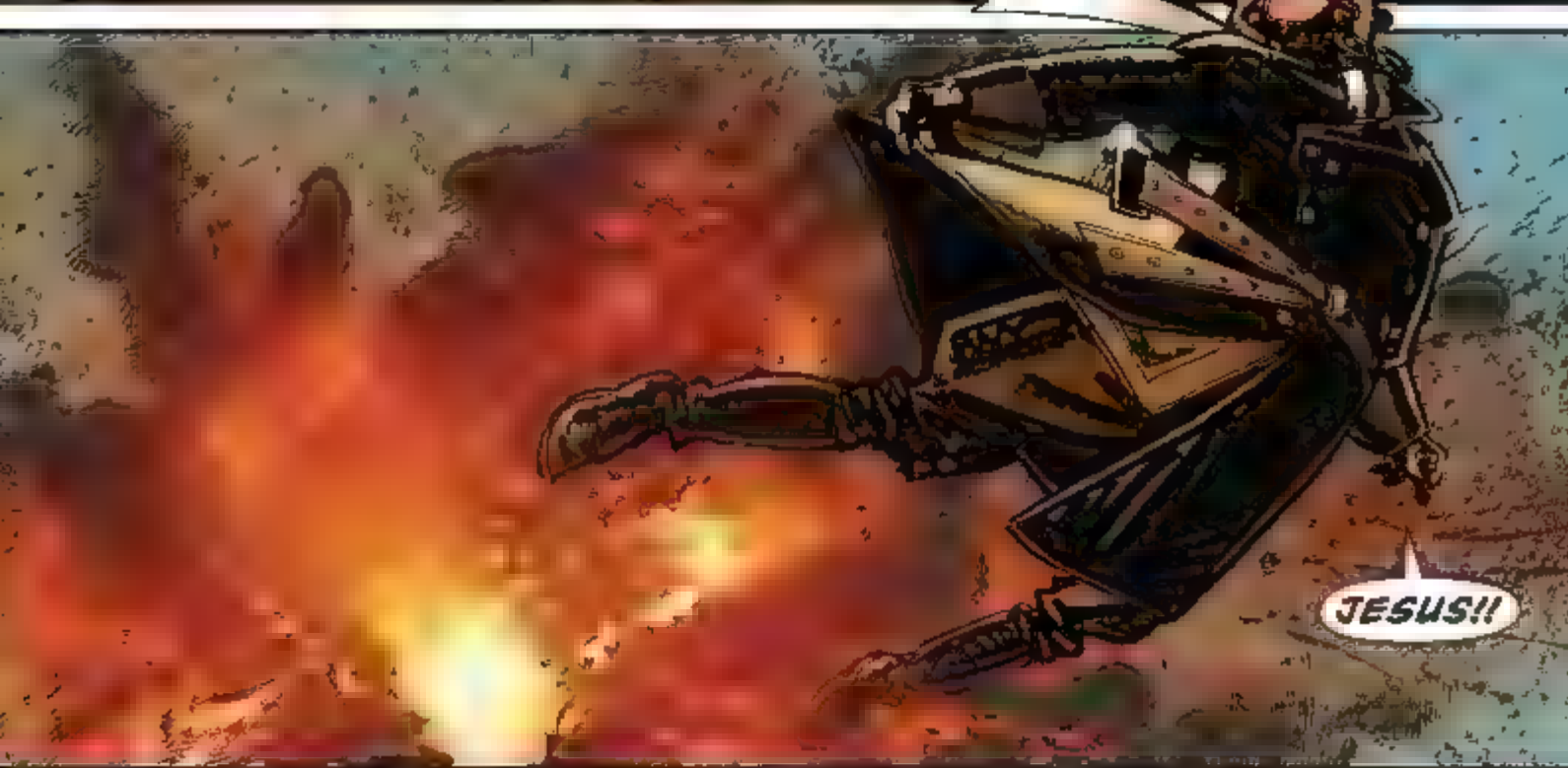
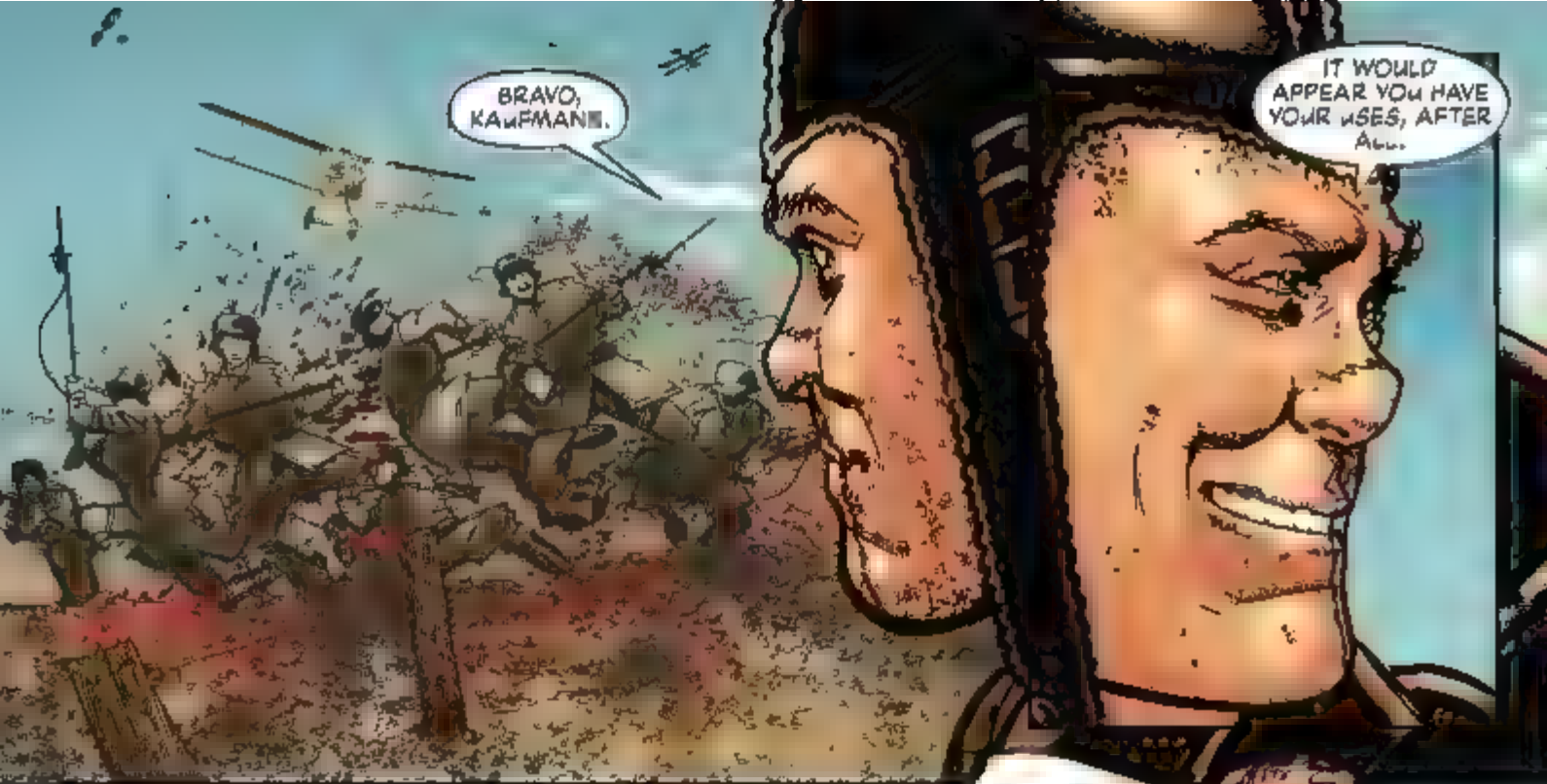




BOOKER!!

5: BLACK SEPTEMBER



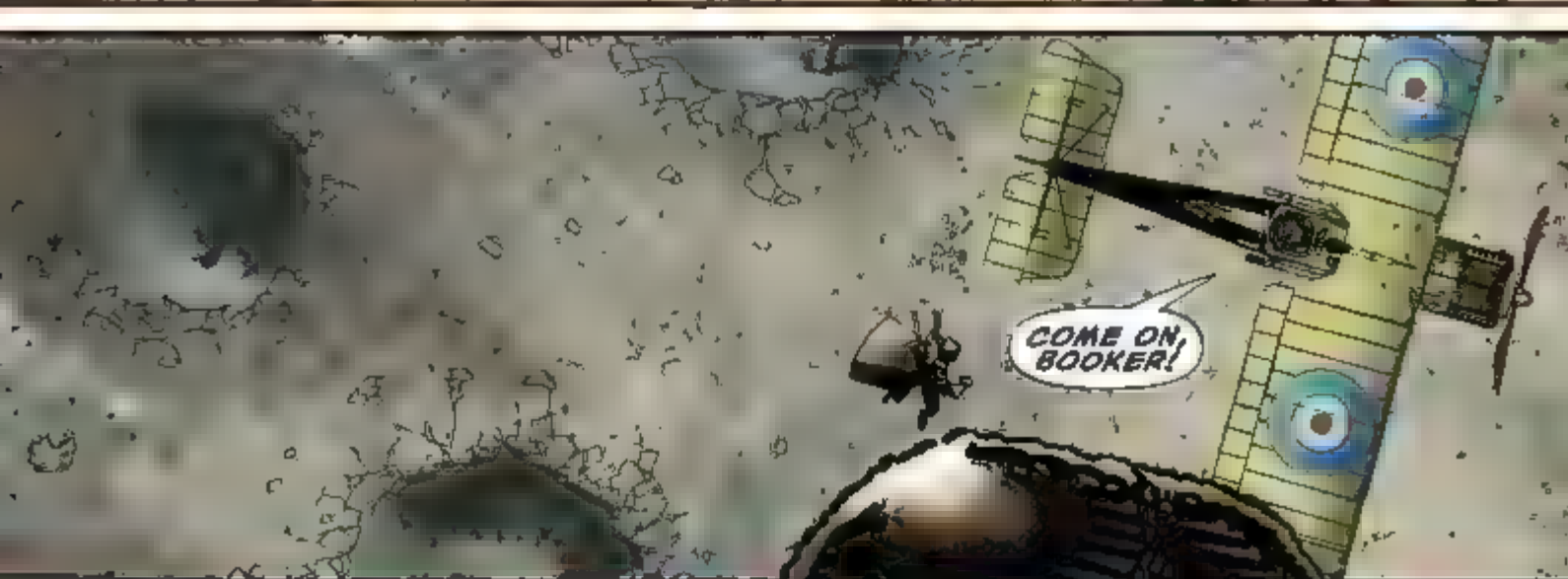




OH MY
GOD.



YOU BLOODY MANIAC,
KAUFMANN, YOU'VE TAKEN LEAVE
OF YOUR SENSES--!



COME ON,
BOOKER!



I'LL WORK
THE RUDDER, YOU
WORK THE STICK! WE
CAN DO IT!

COME
ON!!



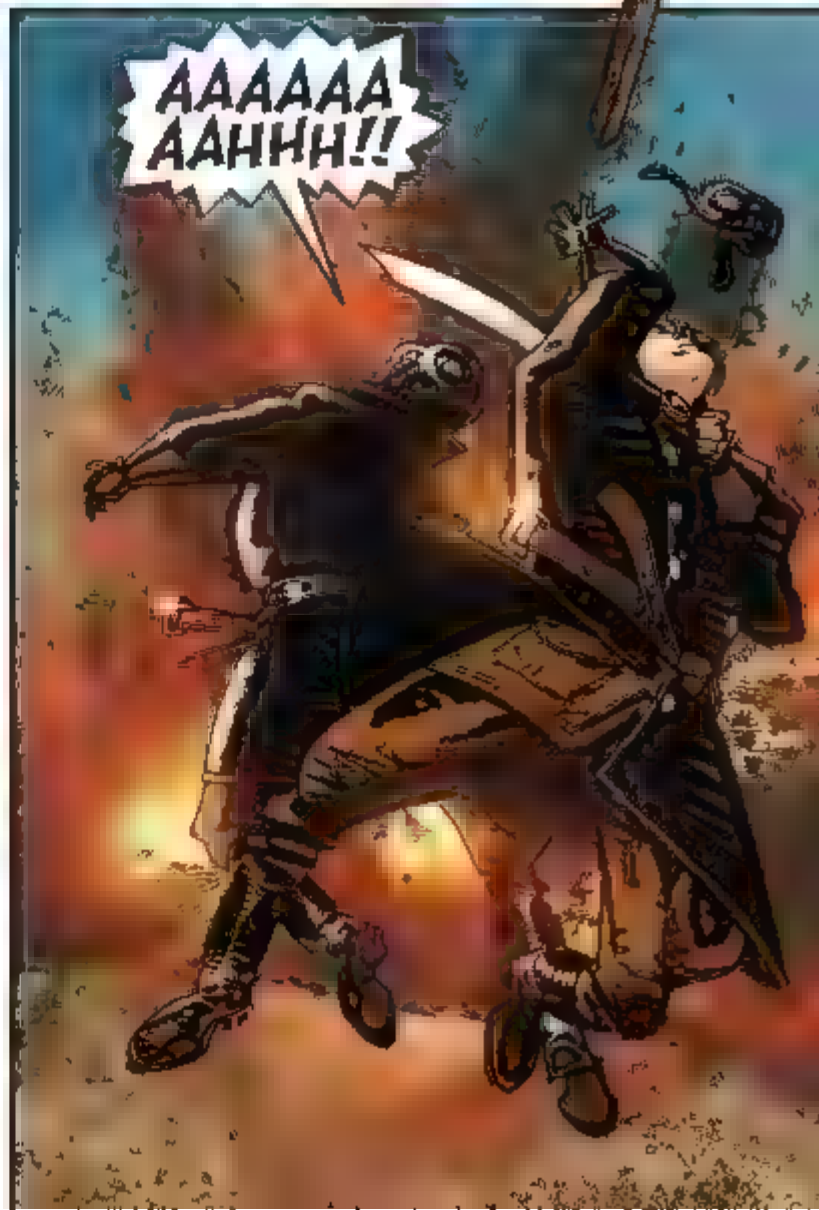
HUNNHH



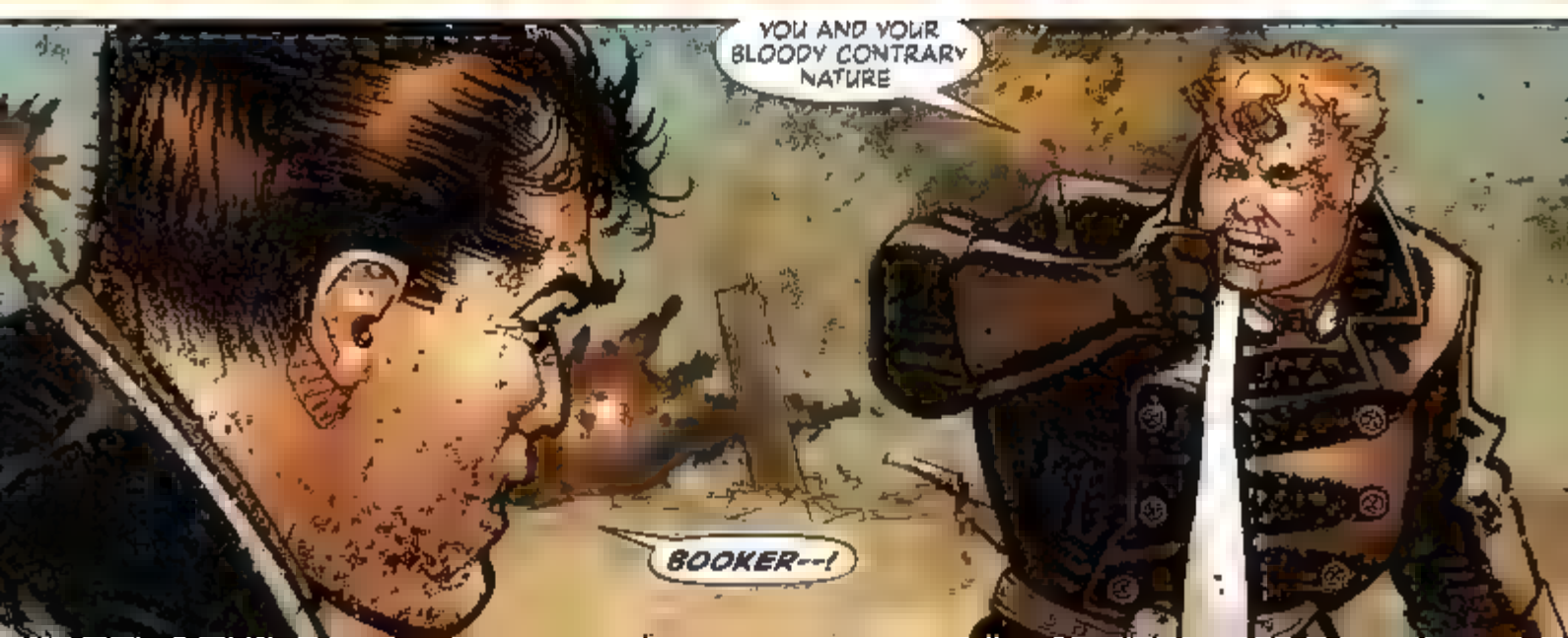
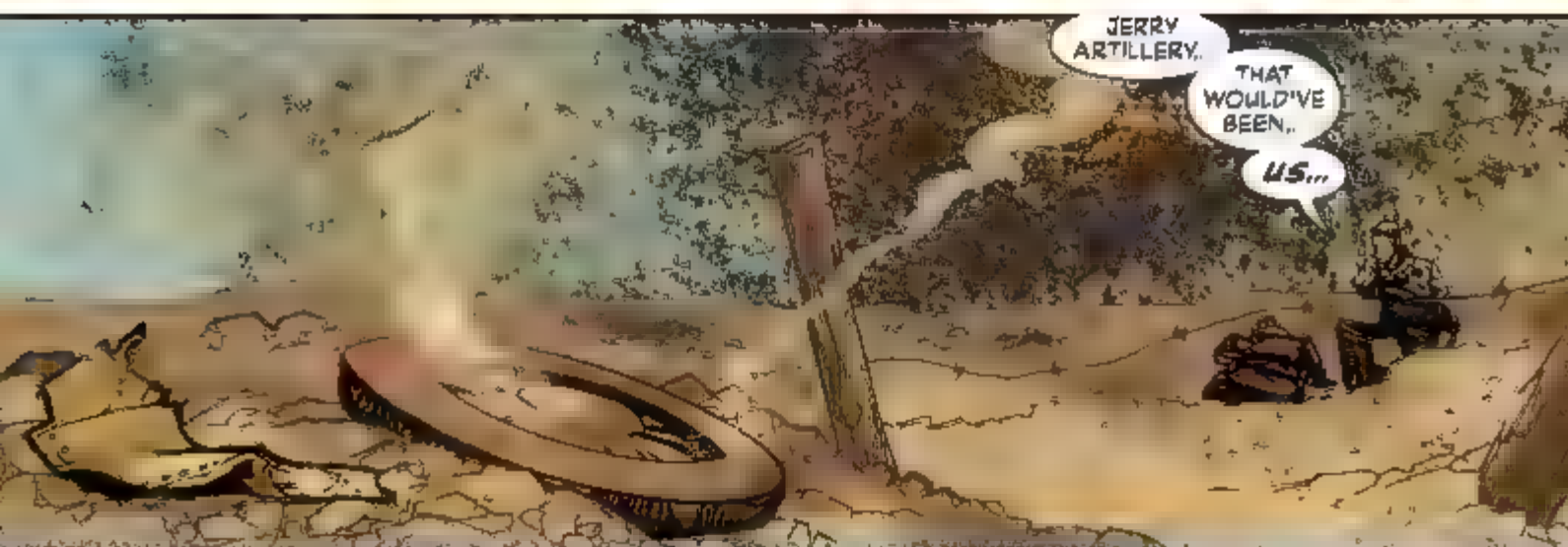
OH, JESUS--



OH, CHRIST--!



AAAAAA
AAHHH!!





CHRIST, IT'S
RIGHT THROUGH ME.
I CAN--FEEL IT UNDER
MY RIBS.

IT'S
NEXT TO YOUR
SPINE...

DON'T
TOUCH
IT.



WELL, WE'RE RIGHT BEHIND THE
HUN LINES, AND THERE'S NO WAY
WE'RE GETTING OUT THROUGH
THAT LOT.

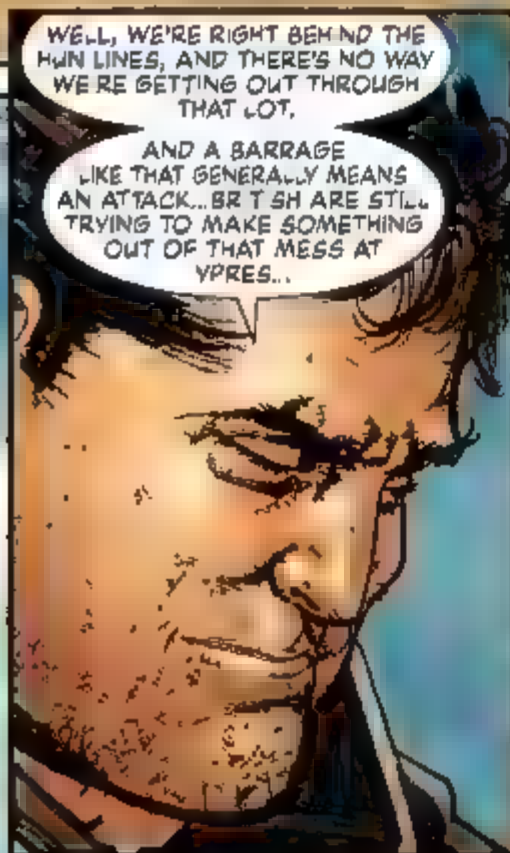
AND A BARRAGE
LIKE THAT GENERALLY MEANS
AN ATTACK... BUT THEY ARE STILL
TRYING TO MAKE SOMETHING
OUT OF THAT MESS AT
YPRES...

SO FRITZ IS GOING
TO BE SHOOTING FIRST
AND ASKING QUESTIONS
LATER.

INDEED.

SO WE
PROBABLY OUGHT
TO SIT THIS OUT, TRY
AND FIND YOU A
DOCTOR AFTER-
WARDS.

THAT
WOULD APPEAR
TO BE THE WISEST
COURSE.





IT'S STOPPED.



I GUESS
THE ATTACK'LL GO IN
ANY SECOND.

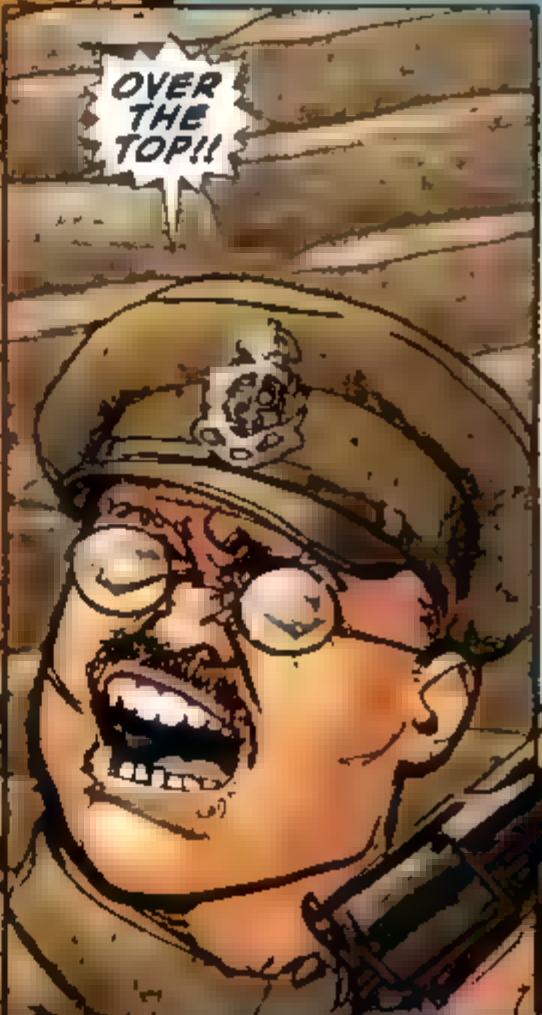
YOU
GUESS
RIGHT
YOU
SHOULD SEE TH'S,
KAUFMANN



THIS IS
WHAT'S REALLY
GOING ON

WHILE
WE'RE UPSTAIRS
PLAYING AERIAL
PING-PONG

WITH OUR
MARVELS OF
MODERN TECH-
NOLOGY.



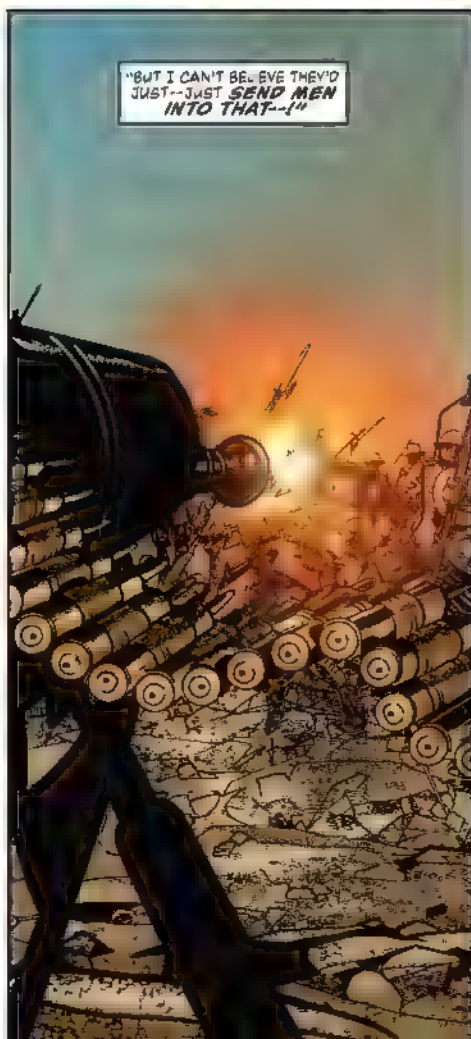
OVER
THE
TOP!!



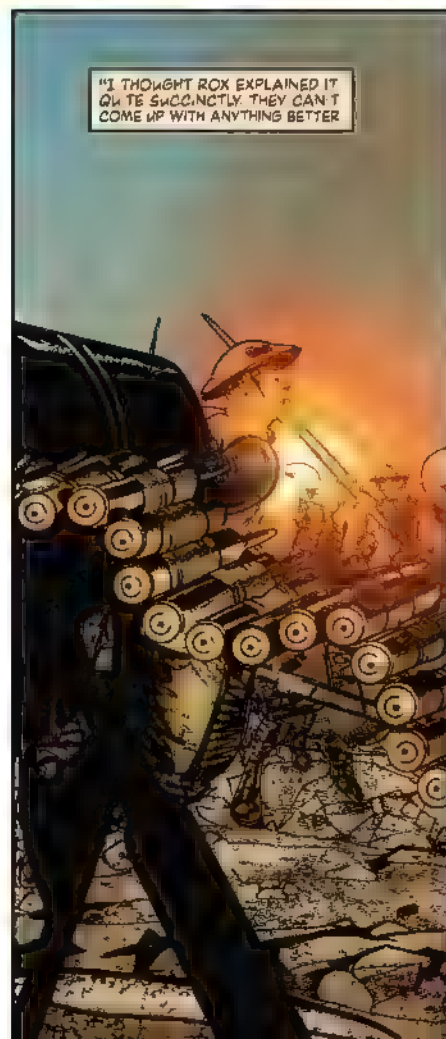
"JESUS CHRIST, THEY'RE NOT GOING TO--"



"OH YES THEY ARE KAUFMANN."



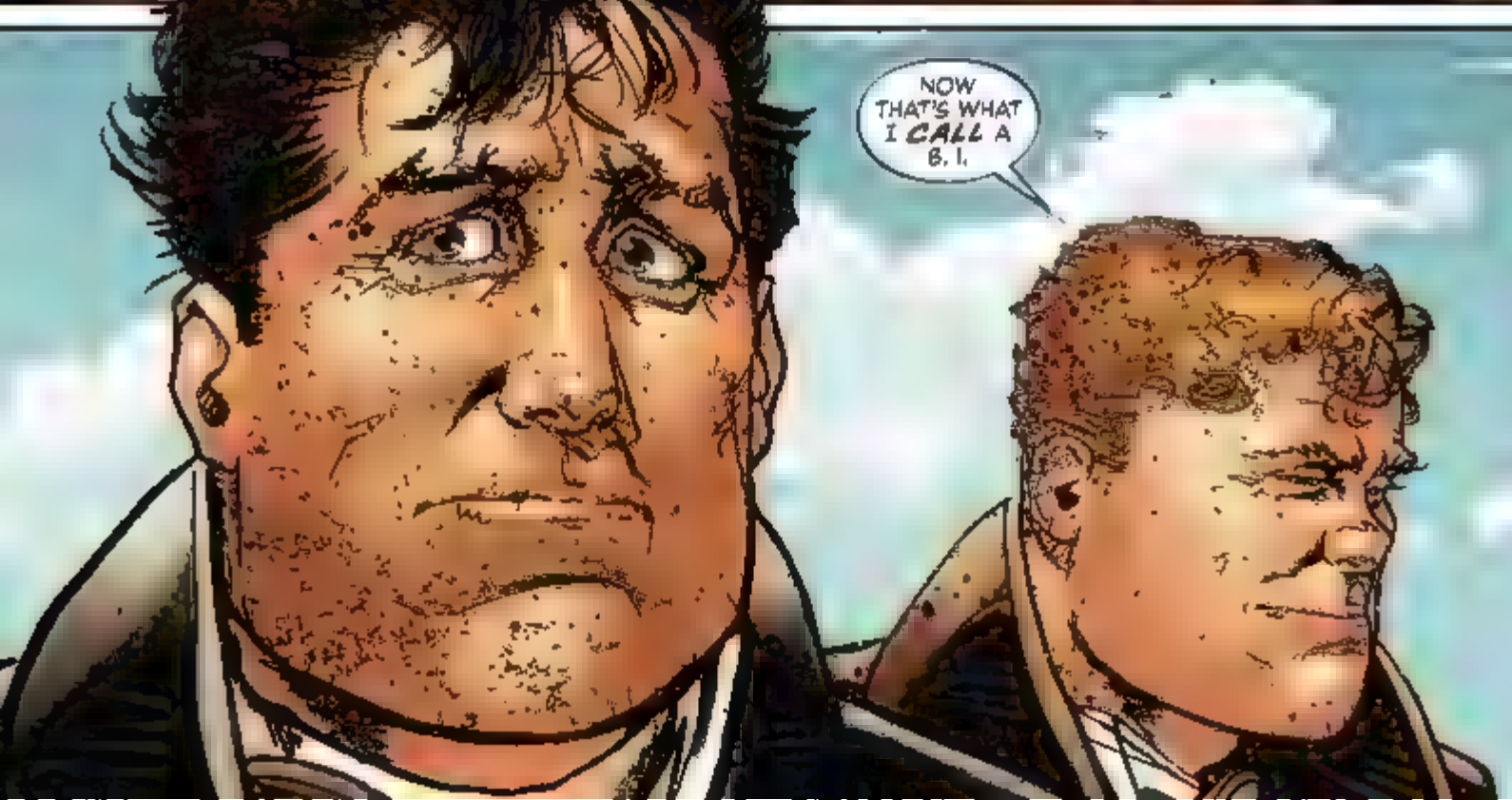
"BUT I CAN'T BELIEVE THEY'D JUST--JUST **SEND MEN INTO THAT--!**"



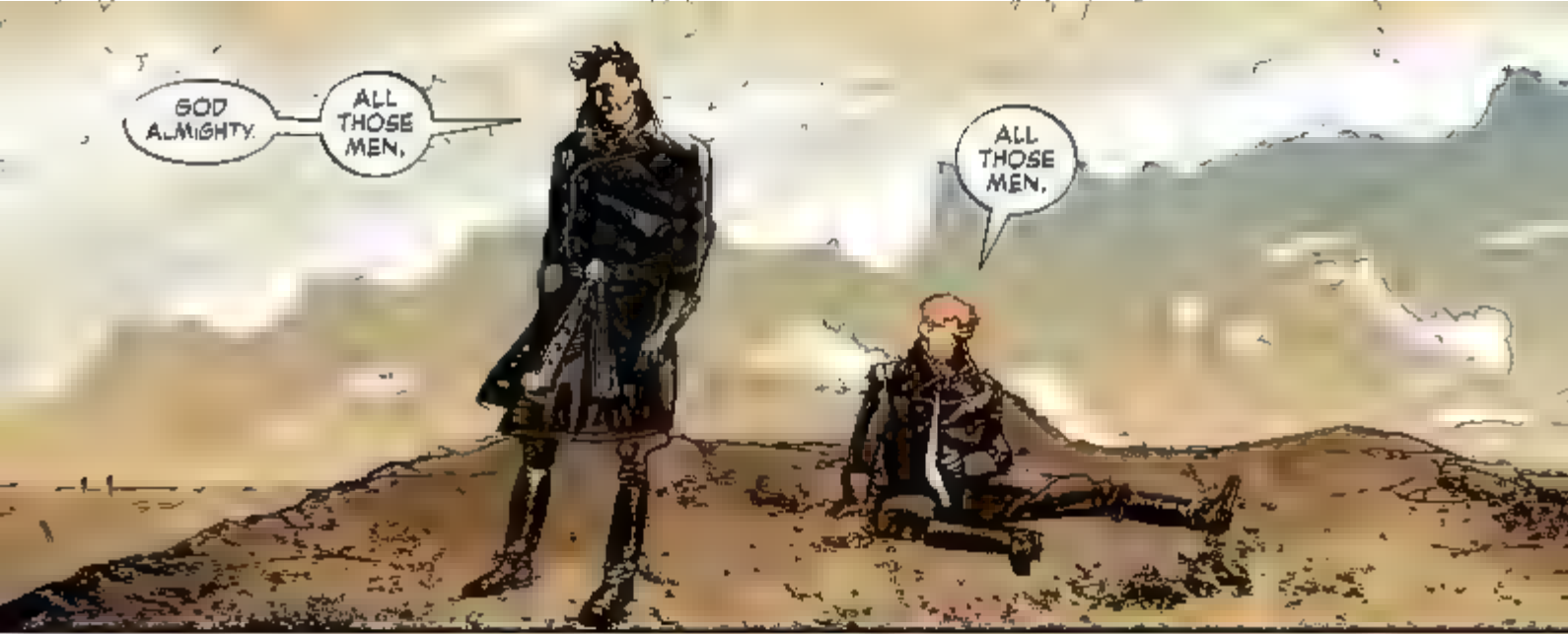
"I THOUGHT ROX EXPLAINED IT QUITE SUCCINCTLY. THEY CAN'T COME UP WITH ANYTHING BETTER



"BUT IF IT'S ANY CONSOLATION? WHEN IT'S HIS TURN, NEITHER CAN FRITZ."



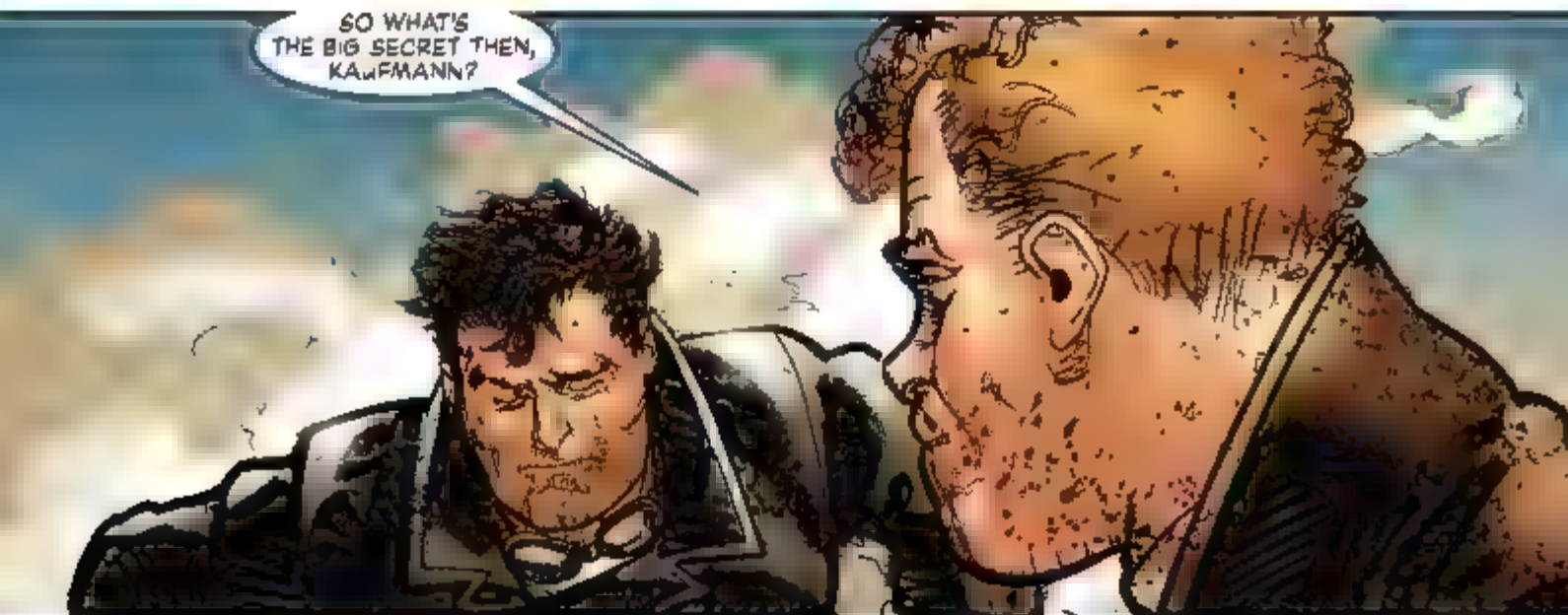
NOW
THAT'S WHAT
I *CALL* A
B.I.



GOD
ALMIGHTY.

ALL
THOSE
MEN.

ALL
THOSE
MEN.



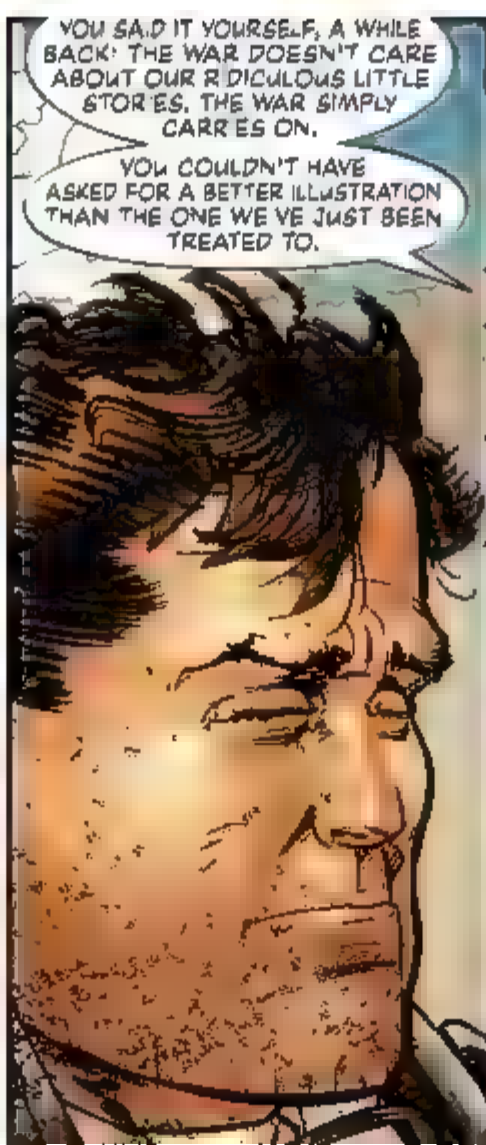
SO WHAT'S
THE BIG SECRET THEN,
KAUFMANN?



SECRET ?

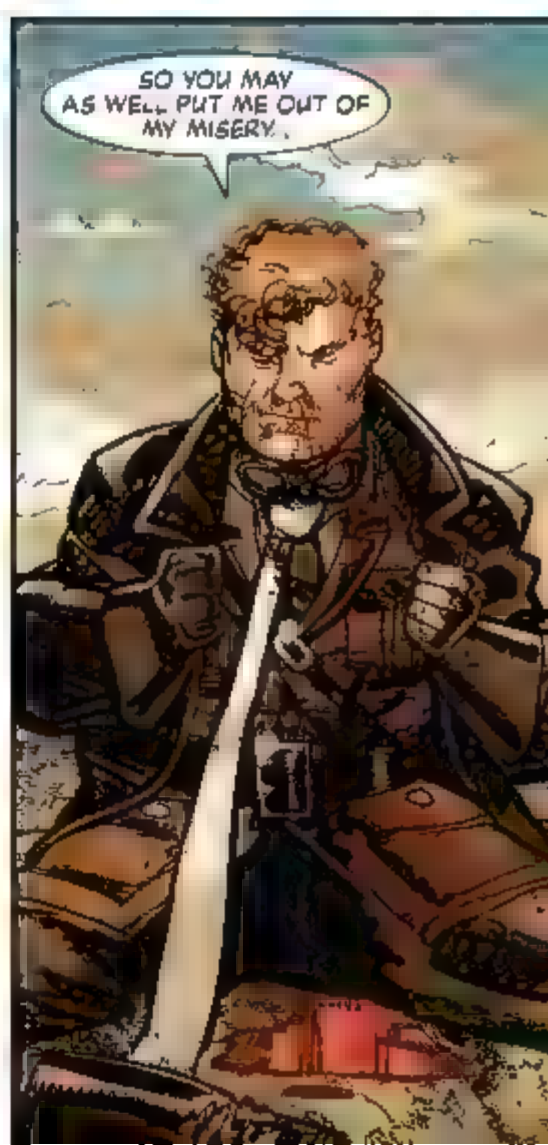
YOU KNOW
WHAT I MEAN, WHY
NO ONE AT H.Q.'S EVER
HEARD OF YOU.

HOW YOU
APPEARED OUT
OF NOWHERE IN THAT
BLOODY SILLY
SPAD.



YOU SAID IT YOURSELF, A WHILE
BACK: THE WAR DOESN'T CARE
ABOUT OUR RIDICULOUS LITTLE
STORIES. THE WAR SIMPLY
CARRIES ON.

YOU COULDN'T HAVE
ASKED FOR A BETTER ILLUSTRATION
THAN THE ONE WE'VE JUST BEEN
TREATED TO.



SO YOU MAY
AS WELL PUT ME OUT OF
MY MISERY.



CHR ST,
BOOKER, I'VE
GOT TO GET
YOU--

YOU'LL
PROBABLY KILL
ME PICKING ME
UP.

COME ON,
KAUFMANN. BE
A SPORT.



.SHIT.

ALL RIGHT.
YOU KNOW HOW I'VE
GOT A KIND OF GERMAN-
SOUNDING NAME?

YES,
I SUPPOSE
YOU DO.



ALTHOUGH SO DOES
JOE MULLER IN C-FLIGHT, BUT
YOU DON'T SEE HIM ACTING
THE PRICK.

COME TO
THAT, I'M FAIRLY
CERTAIN THE KING
OF ENGLAND'S
RELATED TO THE
KAISER.

I KNOW.
I KNOW ALL
THAT T'S JUST
THAT IN MY
CASE IT GOES
A LITTLE BIT
DEEPER.



BECAUSE
IT ACTUALLY
IS A GERMAN
NAME.

MY FOLKS ARE
ORIGINALLY FROM HAMBURG,
BUT THEY MOVED TO WISCONSIN
BEFORE I WAS BORN, AND ABOUT
FIVE YEARS AGO THEY MOVED
BACK TO GERMANY--EXCEPT
THEY LEFT ME 'N OSHKOSH,
WORKING FOR MY UNCLE
PAUL.





I CAN'T IMAGINE **ANYONE** WANTING TO LEAVE AN EAGER BEAVER LIKE YOU

I KNOW.

BOOKER, THERE'RE A LOT OF THINGS THAT'VE BECOME CLEAR TO ME OVER THE PAST COUPLE OF MONTHS. JUST--LET ME GET THROUGH THIS, OKAY?



MY LIPS ARE SEALED.

I WANTED TO FIGHT GERMAN MILITARISM, I BELIEVED IN THE ALLIED CAUSE. AND I WANTED TO FLY, BECAUSE I SAW AN AEROPLANE ONCE AND I'D NEVER IMAGINED ANYTHING SO UTTERLY AMAZING.

BUT I WAS WORRIED THAT IF I BECAME AN ACE AND MY NAME GOT IN THE PAPERS, IT MIGHT GO BADLY FOR MY MOM AND POP BACK IN GERMANY.



SO, MY UNCLE, WHO'S PRETTY RICH AND KIND OF WELL-CONNECTED WITH GOVERNMENT PEOPLE, FOUND OUT ABOUT THE R.F.C. FORMING AN ALL-AMERICAN VOLUNTEER SQUADRON

AND HE BOUGHT ME A TICKET TO FRANCE, AND HE PRIVATELY PURCHASED A SPAD FROM THE MANUFACTURER. MONEY CAN TAKE YOU A LONG WAY, BUT I GUESS I DON'T NEED TO TELL YOU THAT.



DID UNCLE PAUL TAKE MUCH PERSUADING WHEN IT CAME TO SENDING YOU FIVE THOUSAND MILES FROM HOME?

I THOUGHT YOUR LIPS WERE SEALED?

SORRY,
OLD MAN.

ALL RIGHT,
YOU'VE GOT YOUR
PERSONAL KITE AND
YOUR FAKED PAPERS,
PRESUMABLY--WHICH
CLARKIE OBLIGINGLY
CARRIES INTO YOUR
PROP THE DAY YOU
ARRIVE--

AND BY THE
TIME YOUR LITTLE
SUBTERFUGE STARTS TO
SURFACE, YOU'RE ALREADY
AN ESTABLISHED ACE. ALSO,
ANYONE CURIOUS ENOUGH
TO CARE HAS LONG
SINCE GONE WEST,
CORRECT?

YEAH,
I GUESS
SO.

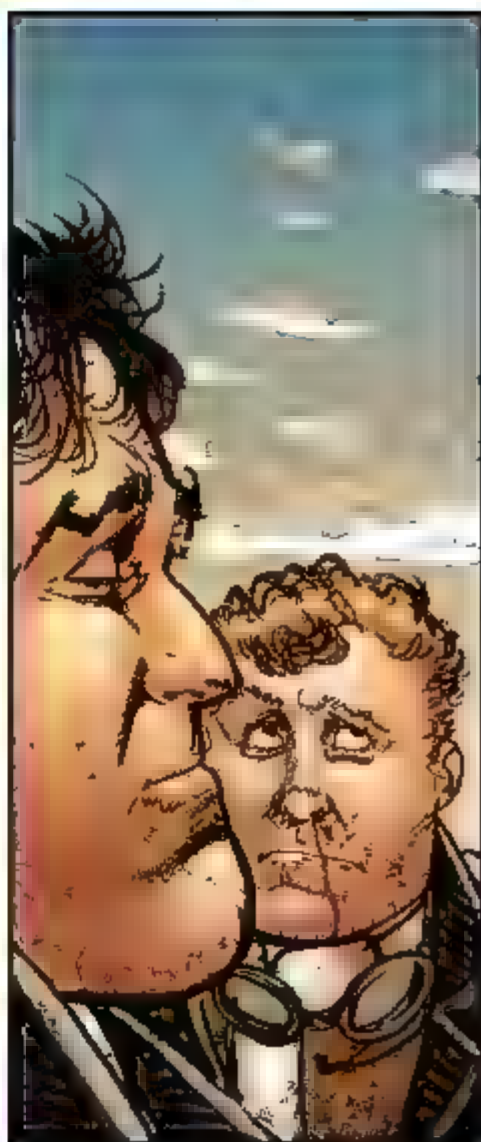
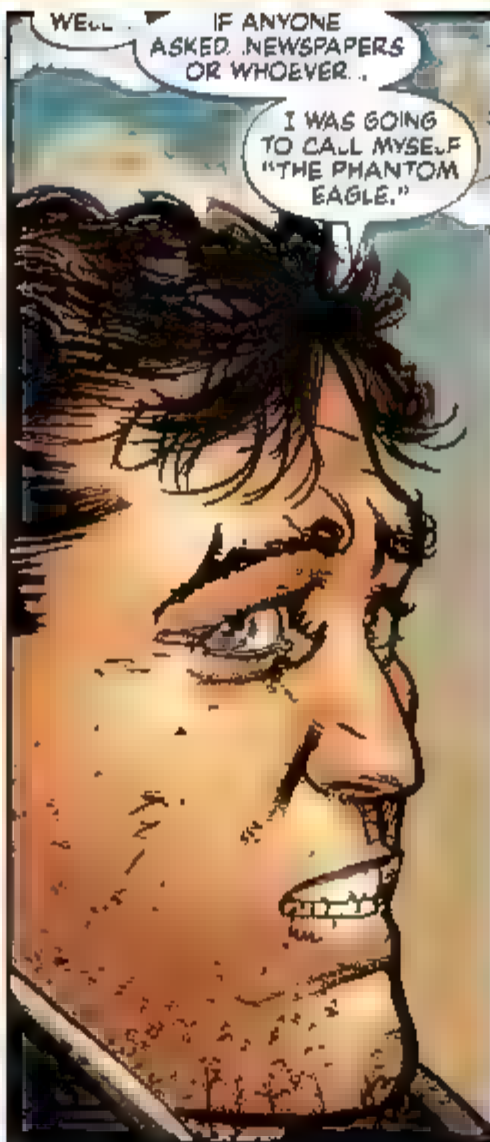


SO HOW DOES
THAT GET YOU AROUND
THE PROBLEM OF THE
GERMAN NAME?

WELL...

IF ANYONE
ASKED, NEWSPAPERS
OR WHOEVER...

I WAS GOING
TO CALL MYSELF
"THE PHANTOM
EAGLE."



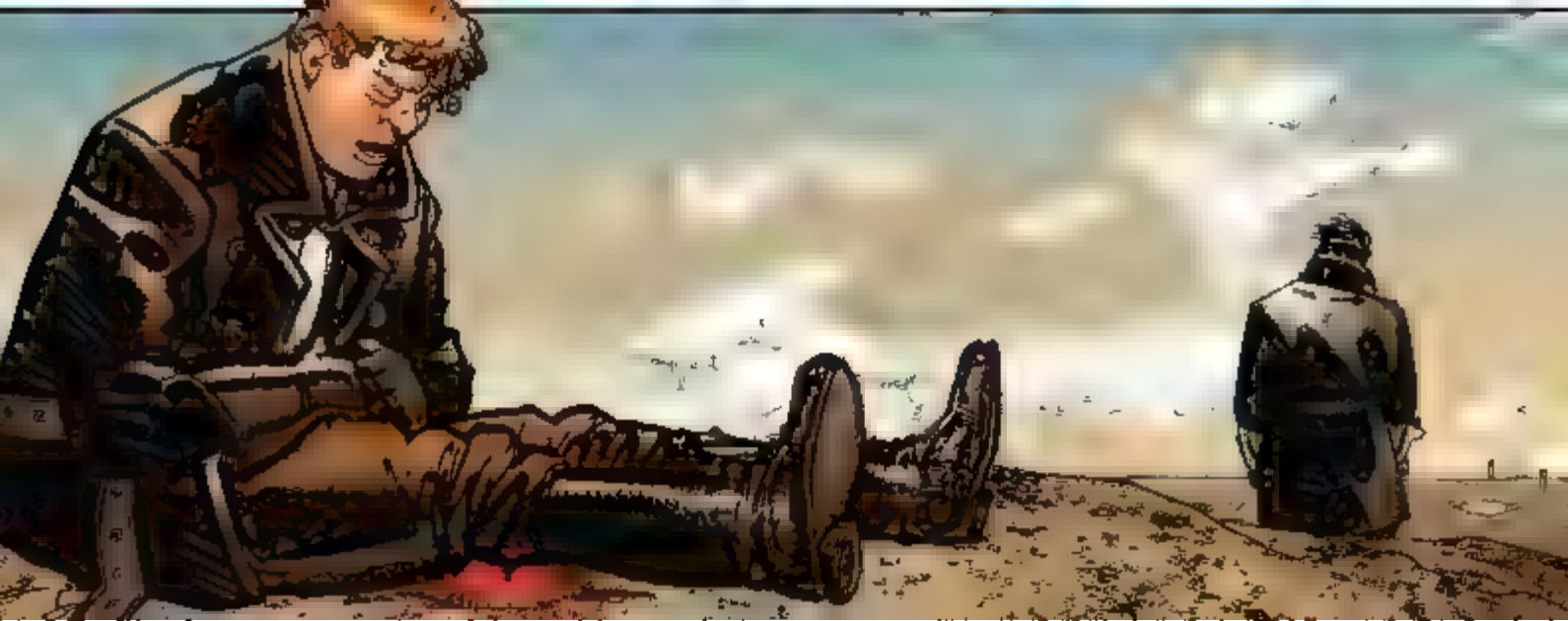
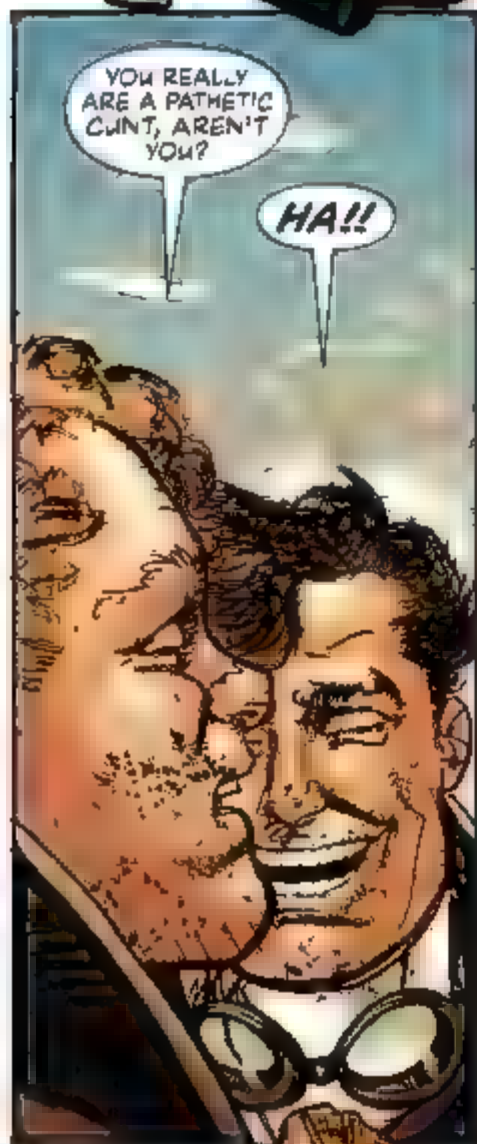
THE
PHANTOM
EAGLE

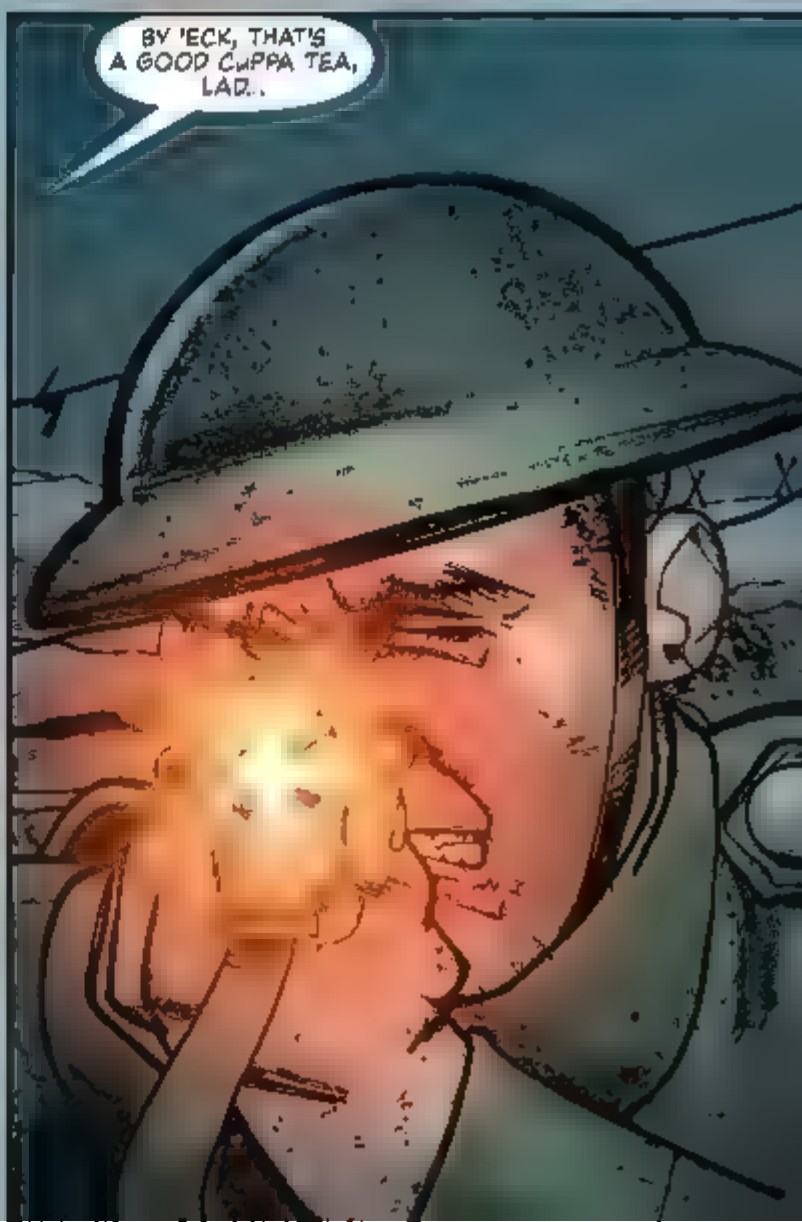
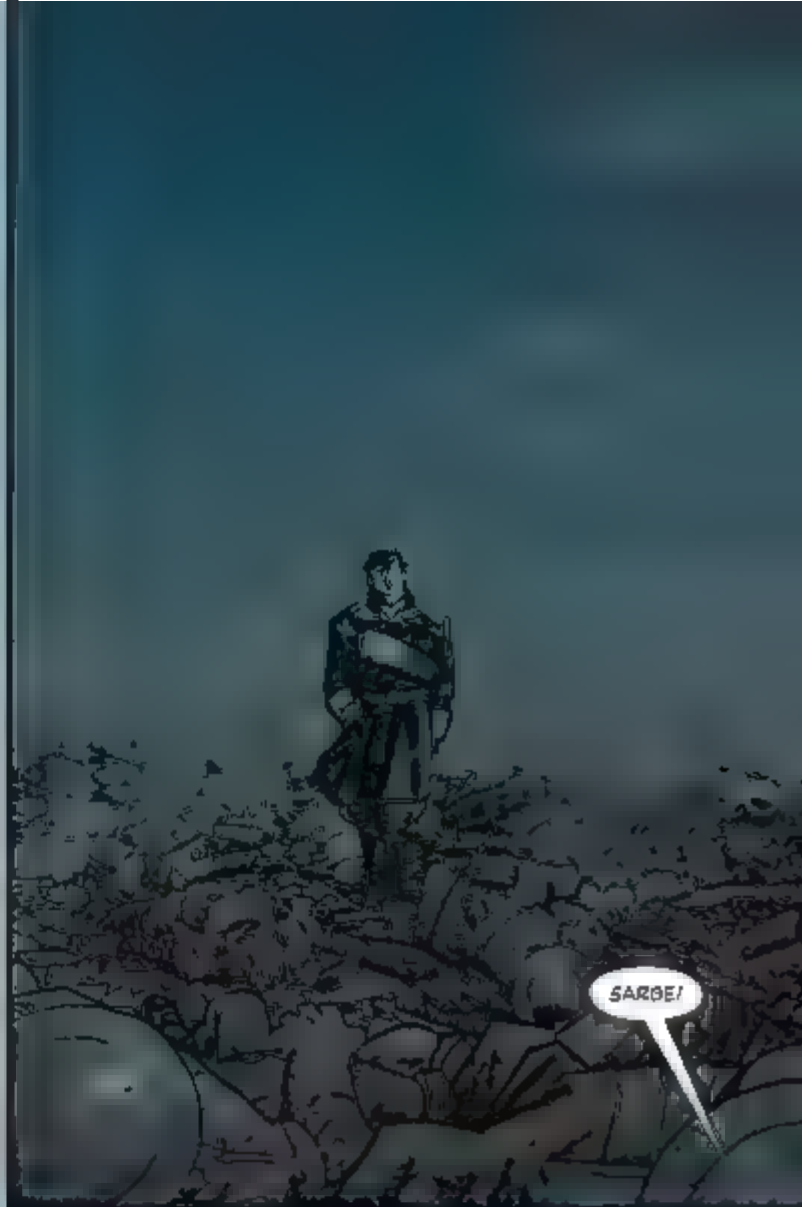
YES.

THE
PHANTOM
EAGLE.

YES...







EPILOGUE



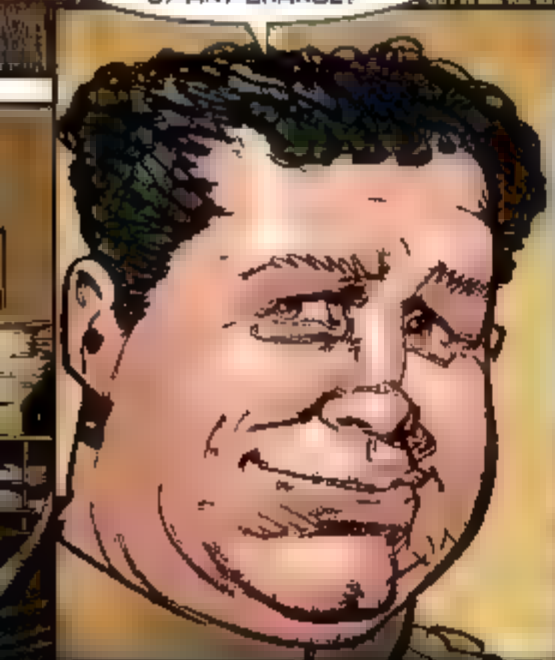
WHAT'S WITH THE SPADS?

OH, HELLO...

WHAT HAPPENED TO THE S.E.56?

I THINK THE BRITISH TOOK THEM BACK BEFORE THE HAND-OVER. NOT THAT THERE WERE TOO MANY LEFT

SAY, WOULD YOU BE MAJOR KAUFMANN, BY ANY CHANCE?



I'M KAUFMANN.

YEAH, H.Q. SAID YOU'D BEEN DISCHARGED FROM HOSPITAL. I'M CHUCK FOLEY, I'LL BE YOUR ADJUTANT--STILL KIND OF FINDING MY FEET.

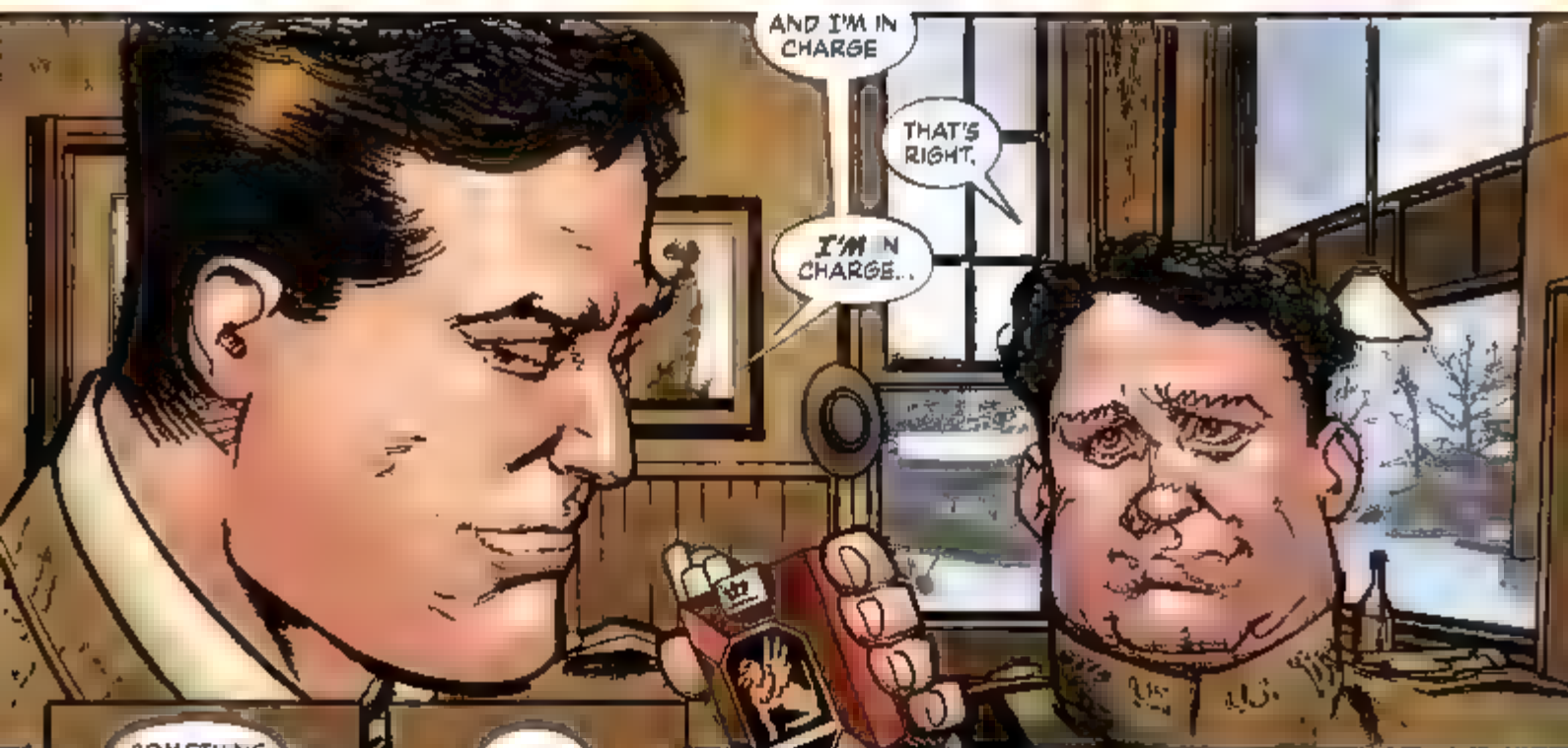
HAPPY NEW YEAR, BY THE WAY...



SLOW
DOWN A MINUTE. MY
ADJUTANT?

YOU'RE RUNNING
THE SQUADRON NOW, DIDN'T
ANYONE TELL YOU? SIXTEENTH
AERO SQUADRON, FIRST PURSUIT
GROUP, UNITED STATES A R
SERVICE.

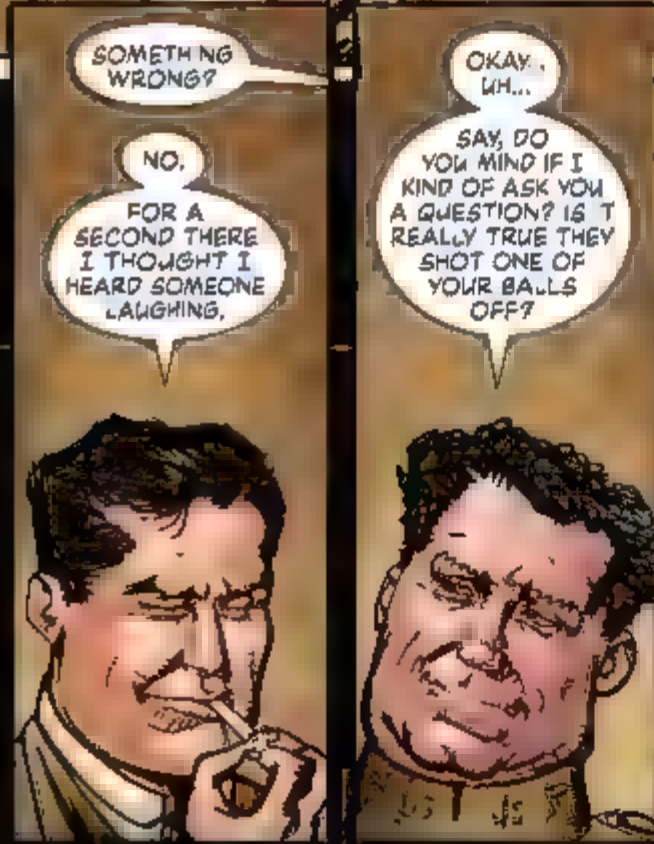
I'M GLAD YOU'RE
HERE, AS A MATTER OF
FACT, WE'VE HAD SOME PRETTY
FEARSOME LOSSES. LATEST
REPLACEMENTS ARRIVED
THIS MORNING.



AND I'M IN
CHARGE

THAT'S
RIGHT.

I'M IN
CHARGE..



SOMETHING
WRONG?

NO.

FOR A
SECOND THERE
I THOUGHT I
HEARD SOMEONE
LAUGHING.

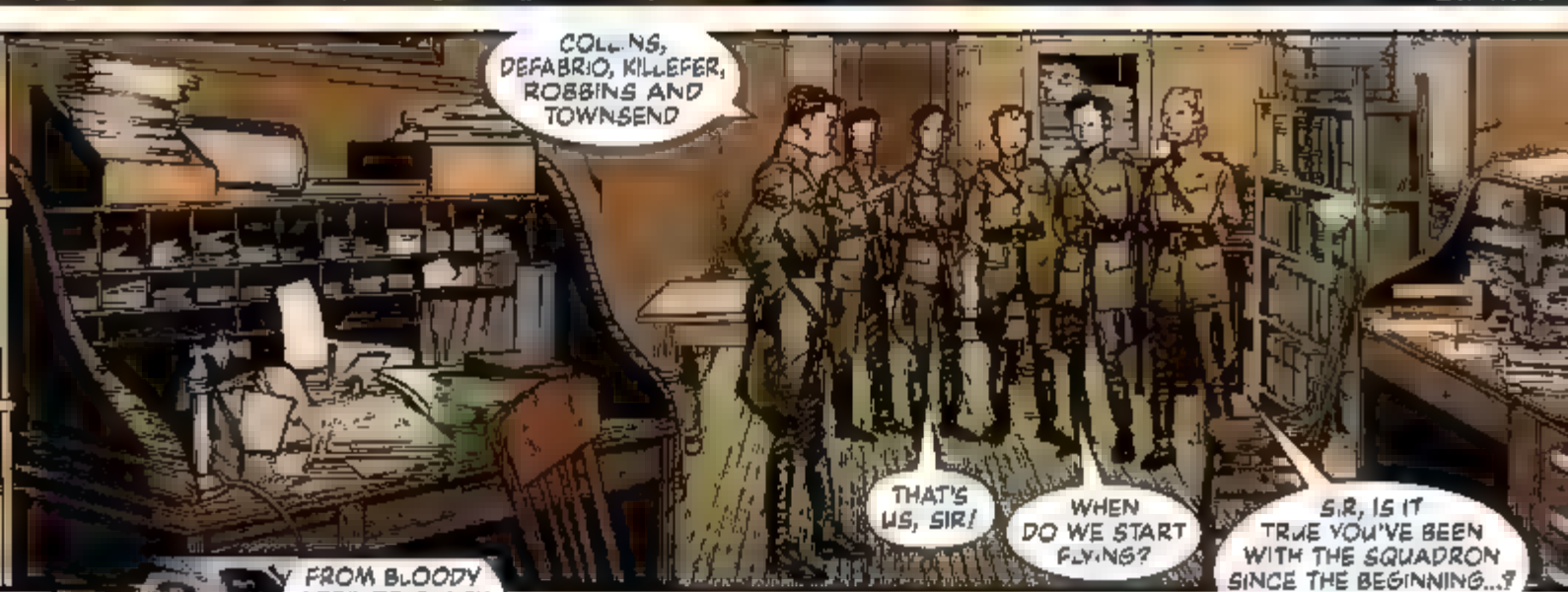
OKAY.
UH...

SAY, DO
YOU MIND IF I
KIND OF ASK YOU
A QUESTION? IS T
REALLY TRUE THEY
SHOT ONE OF
YOUR BALLS
OFF?



I FUCK JUST AS WELL
WITH ONE AS WITH TWO, AS
SOME OF THE NURSES FOUND
OUT TO THEIR COST.

THIS'LL DO FOR MY
OFFICE. GIVE ME A COUPLE
OF HOURS AND THEN SEND
THE NEW BOYS OVER.





JESUS FUCKING
CHRIST ALMIGHTY ON
THE CROSS.

SIR?



THE
HELL WITH
IT.

I'M
GOING
TO NEED A
VOLUNTEER
FOR A VERY
TRICKY
ASSIGN-
MENT...

SIR!

ME,
SIR!

ME!



MISTER
TOWNSEND, I
THINK.

YES--!

VERY WELL, LIEUTENANT: I'M TOLD THERE'S
BEEN SOME KIND OF BUGGERING INCIDENT
INVOLVING THE MECHANICS. I WANT YOU
TO INVESTIGATE THOROUGHLY AND REPORT
BACK TO ME AS SOON AS
POSSIBLE.



S...SIR...?

YES, A S.I. DIDN'T YOU
COVER THAT DURING
TRAINING?

WE CAN'T HAVE
THAT SORT OF THING FROM
THE ENLISTED MEN, GOD ALONE
KNOWS WHAT IT COULD LEAD TO.
YOU'D BETTER GET STARTED
RIGHT AWAY.

ALL RIGHT,
DISMISSED.

YES
SIR



♪ AND
I SAID TO
MYSELF... ♪



♪ TO
MYSELF I
SAID... ♪

♪ OH, WE
HAVEN'T GOT
A HOPE IN THE
MORR-
NING... ♪



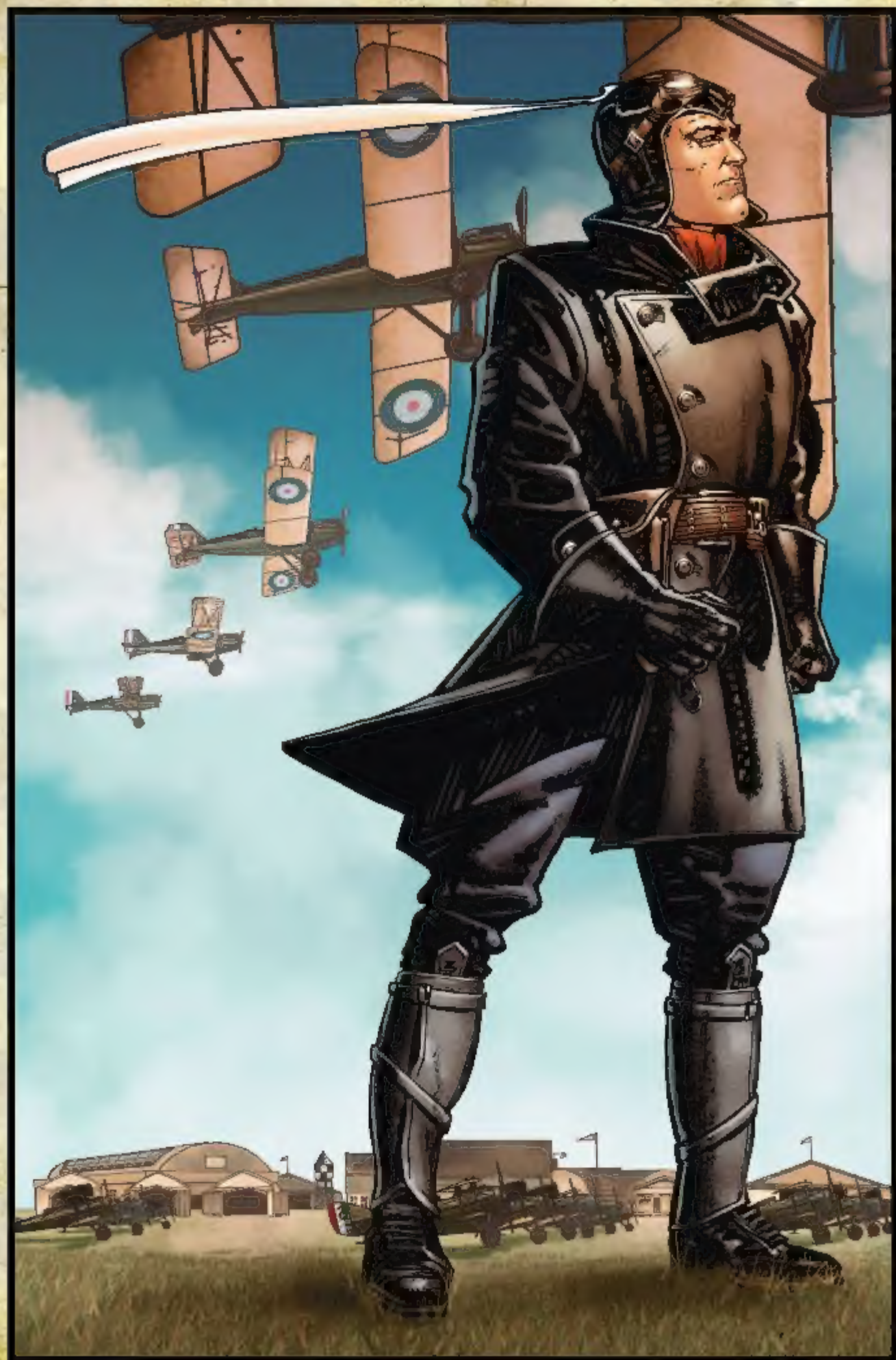
BOOKER, ROX,
FRANKLIN.

JUST
KEEP WATCHING,
CHAPS.

THE
END

Bar-room brawling, bicycle chains and broken bottles have a closer affinity to the early fighting in the air than the chivalrous, formalised, knightly encounters with lance and épée to which it has been likened... To those who studied it closely enough, the limitless open sky became as good a place to lie in wait for an unsuspecting passer-by as a darkened alley off a sleazy street, and the sudden act of violence, when it came, could be as deadly.

— Oliver Stewart, former R.F.C. pilot



"THE WAR DOESN'T CARE ABOUT OUR RIDICULOUS LITTLE STORIES. THE WAR SIMPLY CARRIES ON."

World War One: for the first time, aircraft are weapons. A new breed of warrior has emerged to fly and fight. High above the trenches of the Western Front, young American and British pilots discover that the sky is as deadly as any earth-bound battlefield.

In *War is Hell: The First Flight of the Phantom Eagle*, writer Garth Ennis (*The Punisher*) and artist Howard Chaykin (*American Flagg!*) tell the story of Karl Kaufmann, an ambitious and idealistic young aviator who learns the ugly truth of life in wartime. As he joins up with a squadron of the Royal Flying Corps in France, Kaufmann must hide his past from his fellow pilots, while surviving the rigors and heartbreak of war.

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